



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Rene Ehrhardt

London: Top Ten Hidden Gems

London, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: For those who think they've "done" London or for visitors interested in digging deeper into London's history. London's hidden gems go much further than 10, but this is a good start.

(flickr image: jaybergesen)

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - London



Old Operating Theatre

A painful visit to the theatre



Chelsea Physic Garden

London's secret garden



The Guards Museum

History of the Royal Guards



Horniman Museum

Extensive Collection of Artefacts



Foundling Museum (The)

Home for orphans



Columbia Road

Flower Paradise



Books for Cooks

Bookstore dedicated to epicureans



Ye Olde Watling

Old fashioned city boozier



Tayyabs

Popular Punjabi Curryhouse in Whitechapel



Roundhouse

Performing arts venue in a former railway shed

Day 1 - London

QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +44 20 7188 2679
fax: +44 20 7378 8383
<http://www.thegarret.org.uk>

location:

9a St Thomas Street
London SE1 9RY

1 Old Operating Theatre

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The herb garret is an eye opening adventure through the world of pharmacy. Feel, crush, & mix herbs used in treating patients.

DESCRIPTION: Above St Thomas Church in Southwark is London's oldest surviving operating theatre. Built in 1821, it was the scene of many amputations carried out with a saw and no anaesthetic. Blood would drip - or probably pour - off the wooden table and get soaked up by three inches of sawdust. One wonders what the congregation below would have thought of the screams emanating from upstairs, with the odd drip of blood seeping through the ceiling. With anaesthetics unavailable, patients would often awake from their drunken state (they had a choice of passing out from either alcohol or pain) in the midst of an operation. Fortunately the National Health Service's operating theatres have leapt forward, and medical students don't have such a frighteningly free rein. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +44 20 7352 5646
fax: +44 20 7376 3910
<http://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/>

location:

66 Royal Hospital Road
London London SW3 4HS

2 Chelsea Physic Garden

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Open late on Wednesdays until 8 pm

DESCRIPTION: One of the most fascinating city gardens is hidden behind towering brick walls near the Chelsea Royal Hospital. Founded in 1673 as an apothecaries garden to train students, Chelsea Physic Garden is still used today for education and medicinal research. 5,000 plants are somehow charmingly crammed into lovely greenhouses, plots and trails. Their gallery houses gorgeous prints and watercolors. Public hours are restricted to Wednesdays through Fridays and Sundays, April through October. Also on site are a nice little shop and a cafe. Events, activities and lectures are held regularly. Most Londoners have heard of the garden yet few have ever visited this hidden gem.

© NileGuide



flickr image: bixentro

contact:

tel: +44 20 7414 3271 / +44
20 7414 3428
<http://www.theguardsmuseum.com/>

location:

Birdcage Walk
London SW1E 6HQ

3 The Guards Museum

DESCRIPTION: Dedicated to Her Majesty's Household Division which protects the Sovereign and Royal Palaces... in other words, dedicated to those who wear the red tunic and bearskin hat! Small and quiet, The Guards Museum is a perfect place to learn more about the royal guards and even have your photo taken in that famous regimental tunic and hat. On display are uniforms, helmets, instruments, medals, a tent from the Crimean War and more. There's a little shop next door to the Guards Museum and you might even catch the new guards forming at nearby Wellington Barracks before the Changing of the Guard ceremony at London's Buckingham Palace. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of The Guards Museum

contact:

tel: 020/8699-1872
fax: +44 20 8291 5506
www.horniman.ac.uk

location:

100 London Rd., SE23
London SE23 3PQ

hours:

Museum daily
10:30am-5:30pm. Library
Tues-Sat 10:30am-5:30pm;
Sun 2-5:30pm. Gardens Mon-
Sat 7:15am-dusk; Sun 8am-
dusk

4 Horniman Museum

DESCRIPTION: This century-old museum set in 6.4 hectares (16 acres) of landscaped gardens is quirky, funky, and fun. The collection was accumulated by Frederick Horniman, a Victorian tea trader. A full range of events and activities takes place here, including storytelling and arts-and-crafts sessions for kids, along with workshops for adults. The museum owns some 350,000 objects ranging from a gigantic, overstuffed walrus to such oddities as oversize model insects. There are also displays of live insects and a small aquarium constructed in waterfall-like tiers. The torture chair thought to have been an original used during the Spanish Inquisition was proven to be a fake, although the instruments are genuine. © Frommer's

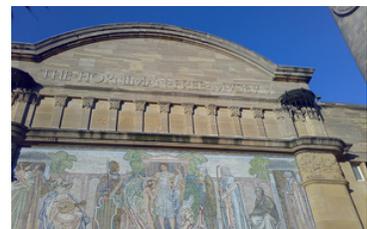


Photo courtesy of Horniman Museum

contact:

tel: +44 20 7841 3600
fax: +44 20 7841 3601
<http://www.foundingmuseum.org.uk/>

location:

40 Brunswick Square
London London WC1N 1AZ

5 Foundling Museum (The)

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Dickens House Museum is just a short walk from here, might as well tackle it too

DESCRIPTION: Located in a building rebuilt next to the demolished Foundling Hospital, this museum pays tribute to the city's original home for London's poor youth. Abandoned children and infants were given a new lease of life due to the kindness of the founders, composer George Frideric Handel, artist William Hogarth and Thomas Coram, a great philanthropist. Learn more about their history through the different permanent and temporary exhibitions held here and admire the unique and intriguing British paintings. Free for children under the age of 16. You can also find out about the yearly passes which are reasonable. © wcities.com



flickr image: Alan Stanton

contact:

tel: +44 20 7234 5800 (Tourist Information)

fax: +44 20 7378 6525 (Tourist Information)

location:

Columbia Road
London E2 7RG

6 Columbia Road

DESCRIPTION: On a Sunday morning, come out for a stroll at Columbia road and you will immediately notice a crowd of people choosing fresh flowers and bouquets for themselves. Flanked by florists and nurseries on both sides, the road resembles a lovely and colorful garden. While you are in the city, do visit the Columbia road. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +44 20 7221 1992

fax: +44 20 7221 1517

<http://www.booksforcooks.com/>

location:

4 Blenheim Crescent
London London W11 1NN

7 Books for Cooks

DESCRIPTION: With over 8,000 cookbooks on the shelves, Books for Cooks has been London's culinary avatar for over 35 years. An inviting cafe in the back lures patrons into spending hours leafing through cookery titles. The shop's cooking workshops and kitchen demonstrations are quite popular - check the website for current listings.



wcities

contact:

tel: 020/7653-9971

<http://www.nicholsonspubs.co.uk/yeoldewatlingwatlingstreetlondon/>

location:

29 Watling St
London

hours:

Mon - Fri: 10:00-23:30, closed Saturday and Sunday

8 Ye Olde Watling

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Closed on weekends

DESCRIPTION: Ye Olde Watling was rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666. On the ground level is a mellow pub. Upstairs is an intimate restaurant where, sitting at trestle tables under oak beams, you can dine on simple English main dishes for lunch. The menu varies daily, with such choices and reliable standbys as fish and chips, lasagna, fish cakes, and usually a vegetarian dish. All are served with two vegetables or salad, plus rice or potatoes. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Ye Olde Watling

contact:

tel: +44 20 7247 6400

<http://www.tayyabs.co.uk/>

location:

43-49 Fieldgate Street
London Greater London E1 1JU

hours:

Mo to We from 12:00 PM to 02:00 AM, Th from 12:00 PM to 03:00 AM, Sa from 10:00

9 Tayyabs

DESCRIPTION: Tayyabs is so overwhelmingly popular with the London crowd that it's not unusual for diners to be lining up outside in any kind of weather. This chic, family-run Pakistani restaurant attracts customers from far and wide and is enamored for its succulent lamb chops, mouth-watering King Prawns and delicious homemade curries. One of the reasons that makes Tayyabs so popular is the prices, reasonable beyond belief for a popular London restaurant, and bring-your-own beverages means the meal doesn't cost a fortune paying for drinks. Though there is wheelchair access, the restaurant



wcities

AM to 03:00 AM,Su from
10:00 AM to 02:00 AM

is so busy, there is little room to manœuvre. Online booking is highly recommended. - Richard Oldale © wcities.com

contact:

tel: 44 870 389 1846
fax: +44 20 7424 9992
<http://www.roundhouse.org.uk/>

location:

Chalk Farm Road
London NW1 8EH

A Roundhouse

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The floor is standing room only but the small balcony has seating

DESCRIPTION: This former railway engine shed built in 1846 as an engine shed is one of Londn's most unique music halls. Renovated in 1964, the Roundhouse has hosted famous artists like Jimi Hendrix and Pink Flyod throughout the 60s & 70s. Due to a lack of funding, the Roundhouse closed in 1983 but reopened in 1996. Today the venue continues to host international music legends.
© NileGuide



Courtesy of Roundhouse

London Snapshot

Local Info

Often quoted yet eloquently perfect, Dr. Samuel Johnson once said, "When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford". Whether in town for a weekend or a few months, London and its diversity is sure to amuse, entertain and enlighten. London is a city of numerous neighborhoods or villages, each with its own flavor and attractions. London has defied fires, plagues, wars and more to become a truly modern metropolis.

Beyond the streets of Westminster where iconic Big Ben shines over the Houses of Parliament and the River Thames lies a city begging to be explored. Most of the major tourist attractions can be accessed by foot although traveling via Tube, red double decker bus or black cab equally adds to the atmosphere.

Royal enthusiasts will bee-line for Buckingham Palace and catch a glimpse of the Changing of the Guard or walk the aisle Princess Diana did on her wedding day at St. Paul's Cathedral. Exploring Kensington Palace and the Tower of London provide an experience into the life of former English monarchs.

London boasts over 300 museums with many offering free admission. From the must see Egyptian mummies and Rosetta Stone at the British Museum to the Rembrandt's and Monet's in the National Gallery, famous works and artifacts come alive from our history lessons. Marvel at masterpieces at the quiet British Library then navigate the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. And even if dinosaurs and Darwin are not of interest, at least skip by the Natural History Museum and check out one of the most impressive buildings in London.

No matter the weather, Londoners adore and fill their green spaces such as centrally located Hyde Park and Regent's Park. Just outside of the city limits, yet easily reached, lies the Royal Botanical Gardens of Kew, one of the world's most captivating gardens. When it is damp or the grey skies become too much, then stop for a pint in a pub or a cup of tea in... well, anywhere!

And let us not forget that London is also a shopper's paradise. Roaming the food halls of Harrod's or bartering for bargains in many of the city's markets is part of London's charm. Quintessentially British and perfect for snatching up luxurious fashion and unique souvenirs are found in shops along the streets of Regent & Oxford such as Liberty and Selfridges or in Covent Garden area.

So, put on those walking shoes, grab an umbrella and prepare to be dazzled by the city of London.

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Fun Facts

1. Interesting Fact: Big Ben is actually the nickname of the Great Bell located inside the St. Stephen's Clock Tower not the tower or clock itself as commonly thought.

2. Curious Fact: The world's smallest police station is located in the southwest corner of Trafalgar Square, carved out of the base of a lamp post circa 1930. Today the station has sadly been converted into a cleaning storage cupboard.

3. Fun Fact: London was originally named Londinium and began as a small colony just about where London Bridge sits around 43AD.

4. Cool Fact: London's Tube stations sheltered Londoners from the Blitz during

WWII, one night a record 177,500 were counted sleeping in the underground transport system.

5. Odd Fact: The Monument was erected to commemorate The Great Fire of 1666 and is 202 feet tall, the same distance to the start of the fire on Pudding Lane.

6. Random Fact: Tower Bridge is often mistakenly called London Bridge and it the only draw bridge over the River Thames.

7. Bizarre Fact: From the 15th to the 19th centuries when the Thames River was much wider and slower, it often froze over in winter and Frost Fairs were held on the ice.

8. Freaky Fact: A sign on the traffic island marks the Tyburn Tree at the intersection of Marble Arch and Edgeware Road where between 40,000 and 60,000 people were executed from 1196 to 1783.

Weird Fact: Covent Garden should be called Convent Garden named after the Westminster Convent garden, it was misspelled.

10. Quirky Fact: Only two of the 260 Tube stations use all five vowels in their name: Mansion House and South Ealing.

11. Funky Fact: Legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix and composer George Fredric Handel were neighbors, only 200 years apart. They lived in adjacent houses at 23 and 25 Brook Street now a combined unit which houses the Handel House Museum

12. Wacky Fact: Her Majesty the Queen is forbidden from enter the House of Commons in Parliament as she is not a member.

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