

The **Regional Section for the UK & Ireland** hopes that you will be able to spend a little time sight-seeing in London – it is a most amazing city. We hope that the following information will be helpful – we cover:



- Where to stay
- Travelling around, and paying for travel
- Free attractions
- Other notable places to visit
- Other things to do
- Guided walking tour and
- Hop-on/hop-off buses

WHERE TO STAY IN LONDON

If you wish to stay at the Corinthia Hotel near Trafalgar Square, that's fine – but it will cost you £1000 per night! The following groups offer some more reasonably-priced hotels:

Marriott Hotels

www.marriott.co.uk and search 'London UK'.

Ibis Group

<https://ibis.accorhotels.com/united-kingdom/index.en.shtml>

Holiday Inns

<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/destinations/gb/en/united-kingdom/london-hotels>

Park Plaza Group

www.parkplaza.com

Premier Inns

<https://www.premierinn.com/gb/en/hotels/england/greater-london/london.html>

Travelodge

www.travelodge.co.uk

TRAVELLING AROUND IN LONDON

The main methods of travel in London are:

1. By Underground railway (commonly called the **Tube**) or, between the centre of the city and the East End of London (where ExCeL and our Hotels are situated), by the overground **District Light Railway** (known as the **DLR**), which connects with the tube network.

Both the Tube and the DLR are operated by Transport for London (TfL). A map of the system is available at <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/standard-tube-map.pdf>.

TfL has a journey-planner [<https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey/>] which can help you to find out which tube line to use and where to change lines if necessary.

2. By red London Transport **bus**. They are fun and you can see London's streets and its architecture very well, particularly from the top deck, but they are slow.
3. By **taxi**. London is served by its famous Hackney Cabs (most of them are black), by private mini-cabs and, of course, by Uber. Hackney Cabs (see photographs below) are all licensed and regulated and their fares are controlled. 'Ride-share services' and 'minicabs' (as pre-booked cabs are known in the UK) can be booked for private trips and will cost less but they are not so strictly regulated.



Hackney cab



The cab's official licence plate

By far the best balance of cost and speed is the tube/DLR system.

PAYING FOR YOUR TRAVEL IN LONDON

It is cheaper to use a contactless payment card, a London Travelcard travel pass or an Oyster card rather than to pay for single tickets. However ...

If the **contactless payment card** has been issued by a non-UK bank you will incur foreign-exchange charges, in addition to the fare, every time you travel.

A **travelcard** is a ticket that gives you the freedom to travel as much as you like on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail and National Rail services in London. You can buy a one-day ticket or a seven-day ticket, but if you need to travel just to get to somewhere you want to see, then they are not the best option -- they are usually only economical if you intend to spend a lot of time each day travelling.

The **Standard Oyster card** is a credit-card-sized piece of blue plastic which is a permanent, reusable electronic travel ticket. Oyster cards can be purchased from many places throughout London, including most major tourist arrival points such as airports and train stations, and from London Transport Visitor Centres, Oyster ticket stops and ticket machines at Underground stations. You pay a (refundable) deposit of £5 plus an initial amount of credit (say £20) to pay for fares. Every time you use the card, a display shows how much credit is left on it so that, from time to time, you can top up its credit with cash. When you have finished using it (just before you leave the country) you take the card to an Oyster machine at an Underground station where the £5 deposit, plus any unused credit on it, is returned.

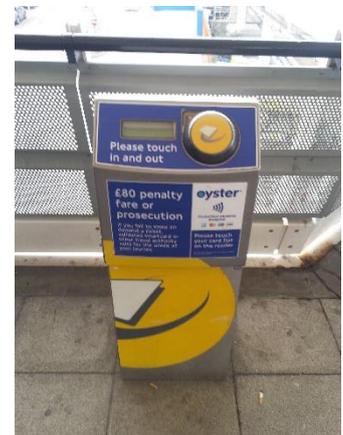
The **Visitor Oyster card** works the same way and it is prettier, with an artistic design. The main differences between the two cards are that the Visitor Card:

- sets a daily maximum of how much you can be charged, no matter how far you travel,
- entitles you to special offers and discounts at many restaurants, shops and entertainment venues, but it
- does *not* refund your £5 deposit when you return the card (although you do get back any unused credit).

The way that you use both Oyster cards is the same – you simply touch the card to the yellow circular contact-point at the barriers (see photographs below) at the start *and end* of your journey (even if you have transferred from the Tube to the DLR half-way) and your card will be charged according to the zones through which you travel. If there are no barriers at the station then there will be a few pedestal contact-points near all entrances and exits. These do the same job of recording where you travelled from and to, but you need to remember to look for them where there are no barriers.



Barriers



Pedestals

Don't forget to touch the card on leaving the Tube or DLR or else your card will be charged about £10 at the end of the day! From the centre of London to ExCeL should cost you about £3.

We recommend a **Standard Oyster card**.

For more information on Oyster cards see <https://independenttravelcats.com/tips-for-buying-using-the-oyster-card-in-london/>

The different methods of paying for travel are fully covered by <https://www.londontoolkit.com/briefing/oystercard.htm>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIZ_xDx2ZI0 shows you how to pay for London travel with an oyster card, and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpkw_NhAHgQ is the TfL official video on how to use the London Oyster card on the tube.

Now you know how to get around London, there are many things you might wish to see.

These are the **TOP TEN FREE ATTRACTIONS** in London:

The British Museum

The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DG

www.britishmuseum.org

The National Gallery

The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN

www.nationalgallery.org.uk

European art belonging to the nation with works by Botticelli, da Vinci and van Gogh.

Tate Modern

Bankside, London SE1 9TG

www.tate.org.uk

A former power station on the south bank of the Thames, now containing an international modern art collection.

Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD

The nearest tube station is South Kensington.

www.nhm.ac.uk

Displays of the natural world, including prehistoric fossils, dinosaurs and taxidermy.

Southbank Centre

An area of the South Bank of the Thames, centred around Waterloo Bridge

www.southbankcentre.co.uk

A major arts centre with the Hayward Gallery, the National Theatre and the Festival Hall. During the Congress period there will be an outdoor Christmas Market beside the river.

Somerset House

Strand, London WC2R 1LA.

On the north bank of the Thames beside Waterloo Bridge.

www.somersethouse.org.uk

A neoclassical mansion, home to the Courtauld Gallery (impressionist and post-impressionist art) and the embankment galleries. Free daily tours. Its huge courtyard is converted into a skating rink from mid-November.

Science Museum

Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD.

The nearest tube station is South Kensington.

www.sciencemuseum.org.uk

Interactive scientific exhibits from rockets to steam engines.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL

www.vam.ac.uk

The world's leading museum of art and design.

Royal Museums, Greenwich

Romney Road, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF.

www.rmg.co.uk

Take the DLR to Cutty Sark station, or arrive by boat at Greenwich Pier.

The Royal Museums Greenwich is home to the Royal Observatory Greenwich, the iconic historic sailing ship *Cutty Sark*, the National Maritime Museum and the Queen's House art gallery. All its attractions are located within easy walking distance of each other. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

National Portrait Gallery

St. Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE.

www.npg.org.uk

The most extensive collection of portraits in the world. For special exhibitions see the website for up to date information.

Other **NOTABLE PLACES TO VISIT** include:

The Tower of London

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london>

Ticket prices at the gate are Adults £22.70; over 60s £17.70 (15% discount if bought online in advance).

St Paul's Cathedral

<https://www.stpauls.co.uk/>

Tickets cost £18 for adults; £16 for the over 60s.

The price of admission includes entry to the Cathedral floor, crypt and the three galleries in the dome. Admission also includes multimedia guides and guided tours (for individuals and family visitors, subject to guide availability on the day).

Buckingham Palace

Closed to visitors in November, but you can visit the outside, see the Victoria Memorial and the Changing of the Guard (usually at 11am each morning).

See <https://changing-guard.com/dates-buckingham-palace.html#/> for updated timings and information.

Westminster Abbey

<https://www.westminster-abbey.org/>

The Abbey has been the coronation church since 1066, and is the final resting place of 17 monarchs. The church we see today was begun by Henry III in 1245. It's one of the most important Gothic buildings in the country, and has the medieval shrine of an Anglo-Saxon saint at its heart.

Adult tickets £20. Over 60s £17.

Houses of Parliament

www.parliament.uk/visit

Guided tours and audio-tours available on some days.

Next door is Big Ben, which is unfortunately currently covered in scaffolding for repair work.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

www.shakespearesglobe.com

Originally built in 1599, reconstructed in the 1990s. Theatre tours and exhibition of London life in Shakespeare's time.

Adult tickets £17. Over 60s £15 approximately.

The London Eye

www.londoneye.com

Situated on the south bank of the Thames opposite the Houses of Parliament. At 135m, Coca-Cola London Eye is the world's largest cantilevered observation wheel. It was conceived and designed by Marks Barfield Architects and was launched in 2000.

It is a very popular attraction, so tickets should be bought online in advance. The cost is approximately £24. For an extra £10 a river cruise can be added.

But there are plenty of **OTHER THINGS TO DO:**

London Parks:

Hyde Park – contains a large boating lake, the Serpentine, adjoins Kensington Gardens, where there is the Princess Diana memorial. Just to the south of the park is the Albert Memorial and the Royal Albert Hall, the famous circular concert hall and home of the Promenade Concerts.

Green Park and St. James's Park – close to Buckingham Palace

Regent's Park – contains London Zoo

London's Bridges and the River Thames:

According to visitlondon.com wherever you find yourself along the Thames you're guaranteed to be close to at least one of the famous bridges over the river. See Tower Bridge from London Bridge. Walk across the steel Millennium Bridge to Tate Modern and the Globe Theatre on the South Bank. Further west, Westminster Bridge goes from the Houses of Parliament on the north side to the London Eye on the south bank.

Some useful websites:

southbanklondon.com for between Lambeth and Blackfriars Bridges

wearewaterloo.co.uk for around Waterloo

Shopping:

Regent Street / Oxford Street / New Bond Street

From mid-November the Christmas lights and decorations will be up. Regent Street is the best shopping and lifestyle destination in the West End. Added attractions include listed architecture, interiors, art galleries, hotels and spas. There are more than 100 global brands, including Liberty, Apple, Hamleys and Anthropologie. Before you come to Regent Street download the Regent Street Shopping and Walking Tour apps or visit www.regentstreetonline.com.

Knightsbridge

Further west, based around Knightsbridge Underground Station, are more famous stores, including Harvey Nichols and Harrods. Harrods is one of the largest department stores in the world and is located at 87-135 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7XL. Visit <https://www.harrods.com/>

Covent Garden

<https://www.coventgarden.london/shop>

Site of London's original wholesale fruit and vegetable market, the cobbled piazza and arches of the old market building remain. Offering a range of world-class fashion, beauty and lifestyle stores, Covent Garden is one of London's hottest luxury shopping destinations. From The Shop at Bluebird to Tom Ford, Mulberry to Tiffany & Co. and Petersham Nurseries to Benjamin Pollock's Toy Shop, the area boasts a unique blend of global and independent brands to satisfy every shopping need in London.

You can join a **GUIDED WALKING TOUR:**

For walking tours in the City of London (the oldest part of London – from St. Paul's Cathedral in the west to The Tower of London in the east) the official guides are City Guides – <http://www.cityoflondonguides.com/>

Two hour walks on specialised themes cost about £10 and do not require booking; you pay in cash at the start of the walk.

London also has many '**HOP ON/HOP OFF' BUS TOUR** companies:

The Original Tour

<https://www.theoriginaltour.com>

A City Sampler ticket, available for one day, costs £25 and can be bought online.

Big Bus Tours

<https://www.bigbustours.com/en/london>

A Classic Ticket for one day costs £33 if bought online, £37 if bought at a Bus stop.

Golden Tours

<https://www.goldentours.com/>

A 24-hour London tour ticket costs £32.

This company also offers tours to other parts of England (e.g. Oxford, the Cotswolds, Stratford and Warwick Castle) if you are planning a longer stay.

If there is anything else you would particularly like to see or anywhere else you would like to visit, please do email eric@effex.co.uk and we will try to help.

