



# How to spend two days in London

Kim Marriner-Harries - Travel Consultant

To paraphrase the great writer Samuel Johnson – when one is tired of London, one is tired of life. Whether it's your first time in the British capital or you're a regular visitor, there's always something new to discover. Spend two days exploring the storied history, innovative arts scene, fashionable boutiques, delicious dining and quirky neighbourhoods of London.





# Day 1

9:00

## Breakfast at an icon

Start the day at The Breakfast Club café in Spitalfields – you'll be able to find it by the line of hungry Londoners stretching out the door. It's a local favourite, serving up comfort food in retro surroundings.

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10:00

## Get a bird's eye view

Hop on a red London bus for the short ride to 20 Fenchurch Street, better known as the Walkie Talkie. At the top is Sky Garden, a lush public garden inside a three-storey glass atrium with incredible 360-degree views. There are colourful landscaped gardens, an open-air terrace and observation decks. Tickets are free but you'll need to register on the website ahead of time.

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11:00

## Walk through history

Though you're surrounded by London's most modern buildings, history runs deep in these streets as well. Take the short stroll to the Monument to the Great Fire of London, designed by Christopher Wren and built in the 1670s to commemorate the devastating blaze of 1666. Head down to the River Thames and follow the pretty Three Quays Walk to the Tower of London. This iconic castle, palace and prison has been at the centre of London life for more than 1,000 years. Then spend some time walking through Aldgate, one of the oldest parts of London, and Whitechapel, known as the place where Jack the Ripper stalked his victims in 1888.

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14:00

## Get arty

Cross the river this afternoon to explore South Bank. If you fancy lunch first, tasty options here include the stalls inside Borough Market, Bedales for small plates and wines by the glass, the trendy Wheatsheaf Pub, and Sea Containers for meals with epic river views.

The Queen's Walk runs along the edge of the river between Tower Bridge and Lambeth Bridge, offering views of the city's most famous landmarks. Be sure to stop in Potters Fields Park, which is always busy with art installations, buskers and pop ups. Continue on to the Tate Modern, a world-class art gallery housed inside a converted industrial power station. Entry is free and the collection includes works from the world's greatest contemporary artists. The gallery also offers a spectacular view of St Paul's Cathedral.



17:00

### Take a spin on the Eye

If you're not afraid of heights, jump on to the London Eye, the world's tallest cantilevered observation wheel standing at 135m. It's the most popular tourist attraction in the city and more than three million people ride it each year. Depending on the time of year you visit, there may also be something happening in the parkland nearby. In summer, the Underbelly Festival has comedy and cabaret. In Christmas, a cosy European village with markets, fire pita and warming drinks pops up. Or you can always grab supplies from Marks & Spencers and enjoy a picnic on the grass.

22:00

### London after dark

Stroll across the Westminster Bridge to admire Westminster Abbey and Big Ben lit up at night. You can even walk past the Prime Minister's residence at 10 Downing Street to see if the current leader is at home. Then hail a classic London black cab and make your way to Soho, a lively district full of bars, restaurants and theatres. Carnaby Street, the birthplace of London's swinging 60s movement, will always be buzzing. Catch a show in Covent Garden or hear live music at the legendary Ronnie Scott's, a jazz club dating back to 1959.

There are endless places to eat around Soho; try Blacklock and Flat Iron for steaks or Mildreds for innovative vegan fare. Enjoy a nightcap at The Tattershall Castle, a floating pub set on a 1930s paddle steamer moored at Victoria Embankment, or Gordon's Wine Bar, the oldest wine bar in London that first opened in 1890. If you like to stay up late, Cahoots is an underground speakeasy housed in a converted tube station that will transport you back to the 1940s.

If you're travelling between November and January, don't miss the winter wonderland pop up at Somerset House. This grand riverside palace comes alive with ice skating rinks, festive markets, food, mulled wine and live music.

## Day 2

9:00

### Find vintage treasures

Portobello Road is home to one of the world's most famous street markets, which turns the main thoroughfare of Notting Hill into a bustling strip of shopping, food and music. There are different stalls open on different days, but you can always find fresh produce, flowers, vintage clothing, antiques, collectables, furniture and more.

11:00

### Catch up with the royals

Buckingham Palace is an icon of the British Royal Family and has been used for official ceremonies for almost 200 years. Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday you can enjoy all the pomp and grandeur of the Changing of the Guard ceremony. Some of the magnificent state rooms are also open for tours during the summer months.

12:00

### Cycle the city

You'll have already spotted at least one of the 12,000 bright red Santander Cycles throughout the city, so now's the time to get on one yourself. Hire a bike from a docking station using your bank card or through the app. Cycle paths wind all through the Royal Parks of Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, Green Park, St James's Park and Regent's Park. If you get too hot, cool off with a dip in the Serpentine Lido, an ornamental lake in the middle of Hyde Park that's open for swimmers from June to September.





14:00

### Splash some cash

London is famous for its shopping, so spend this afternoon giving your credit card a workout. Oxford Street is the place for British high street brands like Selfridges, H&M, John Lewis, Urban Outfitters, Next and Primark. For designer labels and chic boutiques, head to Knightsbridge (where you could spend a whole day in Harrods alone) or the King's Road in Chelsea. Battersea Power Station is an interesting new shopping spot with a huge range of stores housed inside the restored heritage building. When you need to refuel, Mercato Mayfair in Oxford Street, Bluebird in Knightsbridge, and Battersea Brewery or Wright Brothers in the Battersea Power Station are great options. If you're travelling on a weekend, join the locals for an ever-popular bottomless brunch.

If shopping isn't your thing, grab a seat at one of the many coffee shops and wine bars in Chelsea to do some celebrity spotting – actors, musicians, designers, sports stars and billionaires are frequently seen here. Or you could visit the excellent Churchill War Rooms and learn how the Allies plotted to win the Second World War from an underground bunker.



18:00

### Somewhere new for nightlife

Discover some of London's grittier areas for your final night and head for either Camden Town or Shoreditch.

Part of North London, Camden is eclectic and alternative, famous for its sprawling market, live music scene and rowdy pubs. There are more than 1,000 shops, stalls, bars and cafes in the central market area, and many will stay open into the night during the summer months. Admire the street art and graffiti murals that line the laneways then drop into The Blues Kitchen for dinner and some tunes.

Shoreditch is the heart of the infamous East End and has been reborn as a vibrant neighbourhood of art, culture and nightlife. There are some seriously fun ways to spend the evening here: shop and dine at BOXPARK, a pop up mall made from shipping containers; play in the giant ball pits of the Ballie Ballerson cocktail bar; or try your hand at darts at Flight Club. There are also excellent restaurants in and around Shoreditch, like the acclaimed Nobu, modern bistro Leroy, elegant rooftop venue Duck & Waffle, and Brick Lane, the curry capital of London. Finish the night with a whisky at Bull in a China Shop.





# Travel Tips

- London has an excellent public transport system with the London Underground (known as the Tube), overground trains and those famous red buses. You can use a contactless debit or credit card to pay or purchase a Visitor Oyster card.
- Black cabs are abundant and an easy way to get around, though can be expensive. Ride share services like Uber also operate throughout the city.
- It's a very walkable city and often walking may be quicker than public transport – check the map before you set out.
- Many major tourist attractions will always be busy and it's a good idea to book tickets online ahead of time.
- For police, ambulance and fire dial 999.
- London is a fantastic destination all year-round, but visit during the summer months (June to August) and see the city come alive with outdoor events, pop up bars and late night festivals.
- Always carry an umbrella or rain jacket with you. London weather is famously unpredictable!

