

OOBLog – London Guide

When to go: Unfortunately rain is always possible in London so you just have to take the risk. The time before Christmas is just magical (mid Nov-Dec). If you're looking for rather milder temperatures I'd recommend going between April-September.

Accommodation: Hotels are a bit tricky in London. I'd definitely recommend staying in a central location. If you're looking for a hotel in the lower price range I'd say better prefer AirBnB. I stayed in both, hotels and Airbnb's.

- London House Hotel a small but very cute and clean hotel in Notting Hill. Prices are very reasonable but Notting Hill is not too central but still a very nice location.
- Apartment on Bow Street: This apartment was just perfect. Location just 2 minutes from Covent Garden. 2 rooms, suitable for 4 persons, really nice decor. Only downside was the noise at night due to the central location. The owner also has many other similar listings on AirBnB..
- Apartment in Seven Dials: Another beautiful apartment in a stunning location. It's a one bedroom apartment but still 3-4 people can stay in it.

Transportation: There are different options depending on which Airport you're arriving to. In all cases I recommend public transportation unless you're a group of 3-4 people or more and can fit in one taxi.

- Heathrow: Heathrow Express will take you to Paddington station in just 15 minutes. Prices range from 5.5 pound (if you book in advance online) to 20 pound (ouch). If you don't want to spend that much take the Picadilly line (blue line) for 3.10 pound which will take you to Covent Garden in just 45 minutes.
- Gatwick: Gatwick Express will take you to Victoria station in just 30 minutes. If bought online tickets cost 18 Pound for one-way and 31 Pound for a roundtrip. If you are a group of two you pay 45 Pound for a roundtrip.
- Stansted: Stansted Express will take you to Liverpool station in just 45 minutes. Online oneway tickets cost 8 Pound.
- Luton: You can take the train from Luton Airport Parkway station which can be reached via a shuttle bus leaving from the airport terminal. The train will take you to St Pancras International station. Journey takes around 40 minutes.

In the city you can benefit from the very extensive underground and bus network. Underground gets very crowded during rush hour, especially around 4pm so better avoid this hours if you don't want to sit on the lap of a stranger :) Uber is always a great choice although London traffic can be horrible. If you prefer taking a Black cab I recommend you download the Gett App which let's you call a cab from your smart phone. It also gives you a fixed price in advance which is always cheaper than the metered fare.

What to do: If you want to do all from touristic spots, to museums, musicals etc you definitely spend a week there. Of course a long weekend is always a good choice. You could also add day trips to Stonehenge, Brighton or Oxford. So it's your call, but don't expect to see every part of London in 2-3 days.

Knightsbrige, Chelsea, Belgravia

These London neighborhoods stand for beautiful houses, chique cafes and restaurant, art galleries and high end shopping. The famous department store Harrods is located in Knightsbrige along with many many shops to go wild. Walk down Sloane Street, which is full with high end designer stores, to reach Sloane Square. Continue onto King's Road, one of London's most famous streets. Stop by Saatchi Gallery to check out the latest exhibition (they are always great). Next to Chelsea there is Belgravia where you can have coffee and cake at one of the cute cafes. Except Harrods this area is rather tourist free. While you're here you can also visit the nearby Albert & Victoria Museum or National History Museum. Both offer free admission. Nearest underground stations are Knightsbrige or Sloane Square, for the museums get off at South Kensington station.

Hotspots

The Botanist - Nice dinner place - 7 Sloane Square

Mari Vanna - Russian cuisine, great decor - 116 Knightsbridge

Bluebird - Nice garden - 350 King's Rd

The Ivy Chelsea Garden - Go for the backyard - 195 -197 King's Rd

Peggy Porschen - I just love this bakery! - 116 Ebury St

TomTom - Great coffees- 114 Ebury St

Colbert - French bistro, have a drink on their terrace- 50-52 Sloane Square

Benihana - Japanese - 77 King's Rd

Tom's Kitchen - Nice dinner spot - 27 Cale St

Nell's - Pastries are yummy - 191 King's Rd

Aubaine - Cute little french bistro - 260-262 Brompton Rd

Baker & Spice - Quick lunch Chelsea (47 Denyer St) or Belgravia (54-56 Elizabeth St)

Polpo - Italian tapas - 81 Duke of York Square

Manicomio - Italian with nice terrace - The Duke Of York Square, 83-85

Pizza Express - Love the front garden - 152 King's Rd

L'Eto - Quicl lunch. Chelsea (149 King's Rd) or Belgravia (10 W Halkin St)

Ottolenghi - Great for lunch - 13 Motcomb St

Zuma - Fancy Japanese - 5 Raphael St

Byron - Great burger place with several branches all over London - 300 King's Rd

Mayfair

Mayfair is one of London's posh neighborhoods. If you want to shop for Dior or have a fancy dinner that's where you should go. But Mayfair is not just nice for spending some money. It is also the home to London's most beautiful sights and streets. So no matter on what budget you are you should not miss a day in Mayfair.

Mayfair is located in the square between Marble Arch, Oxford Circus, Piccadilly Circus and Hyde Park Corner. Its most famous shopping streets are Regent Street, Oxford Street, Bond Street and Piccadilly. Here you can find anything from H&M to Tiffany & Co. London's famous department store Selfridges also has a branch in Mayfair. Especially during Christmas season you can find the most beautiful window setups and Christmas decorations here.

As you can imagine dining in Mayfair is rather expensive. If not for dinner or lunch you should definitely have afternoon tea here. Mayfair has the most beautiful teatime spots, which is something you should do at least once when in London. Closest underground stations are Bond Street, Oxford Circus, Piccadilly Circus

Hotspots

Nac - Little French bistro, perfect for breakfast - 41 N Audley St

Sandwich Centre - Awesome sandwich spot - 16 Royal Opera Arcade

Taylor St Baristas - great coffees - 22 Brook's Mews

Benugo - If you want a quick bite - 14 Curzon St

Burlington Arcade - Very nice passage with vintage jewelry shops - 51 Piccadilly

Hamley's - For the inner child in you, or actually your children - 188 Regent St

Maison Assouline - Book store/bar. Great for an afternoon drink - 196A Piccadilly

The Mayfair Chippy - If you want to pay 20 Pounds for Fish&Chips. But very good! - 14 N Audley St

Fortnum & Mason - Great department store and epic afternoon tea - 181 Piccadilly

Sketch - Funny place :) Have afternoon tea in the pink room - 9 Conduit St

The Wolseley - Just love this place, another great afternoon tea spot - 160 Piccadilly

The Palm Court - Inside the Ritz Hotel, one of the best afternoon teas - 150 Piccadilly

Burger & Lobster - Funny but great combo - 29 Clarges St

Coya - Peruvian cuisine - 118 Piccadilly

Nobu - Always good Japanese - 15 Berkeley St

Novikov - 50A Berkeley St

La Petite Maison - Nice and fancy French - 54 Brook's Mews

Hakkasan - Fancy Chinese - 17 Bruton St

Goodman - Steak house - 24-26 Maddox St

Sexy Fish - Speaks for itself - Berkeley Square

Chiltern Firehouse - Have drinks here - 1 Chiltern St

Park Chinois - For a romantic dinner with live music - 17 Berkeley St

Soho and Covent Garden

Londons most fun neighbourhoods. Here you can find great restaurants, shops, nightlife, pubs and most importantly Londons great musical theatres and the Royal Opera House. The Covent Garden area is especially great for shopping. Soho is great to have a drink in the evening or go to a club. Also don't forget Carnaby Street and Chinatown. The National Portrait Gallery and the British Museum are another two must visit places. As you can tell there are a lot of options around here and there are so many places I can recommend. Nearest underground stations: Covent Garden or Leicester Square.

Covent Garden hotspots

Grind - My favourite coffee/breakfast spot. They also have a Soho branch (19 Beak St) - 42 Maiden Ln

Tuttos - Great for breakfast - 11-12 Russell St

Monmouth Coffee - Best coffee in London - 27 Monmouth St

Kastner & Ovens - For a quick bite - 52 Floral St

Benugo - Great coffee/sandwich chain - 63 Long Acre

Polpo - Italian tapas. Always packed, no reservations - 6 Maiden Ln, 142 Shaftesbury Ave or 41 Beak St

Flat Iron - Great prices, great steak, long waiting times - 17-18 Henrietta St, 9 Denmark St veya 17 Beak St

Neal's Yard - Don't miss this cute yard

Balthazar - French bistro, great anytime of the day - 4-6 Russell St

The Ivy Market Grill - The Ivy's youngest location - 1 Henrietta St

Joe's - Southern American kitchen - 34 King St

Fumo - Great atmosphere and great prices - 37 St Martin's Ln

The Real Greek - If you're up for some greek mezzes - 60-62 Long Acre or 54 St Martin's Ln

Flech & Buns - Fun Japanese - 41 Earlham St

Homeslice Pizza - Cute pizza place in Neal's Yard - 13 Neal's Yard

Brasserie Max - Great breakfast buffet - 10 Monmouth St

Meat Market - Yummy burgers - Jubilee Market Hall

Franco Manca - Pizza - 39 Maiden Ln

Busaba Eathai - Thai cuisine - 44 Floral St veya 35 Panton St

Soho hotspots

The Breakfast Club - Legendary breakfast spot - 33 D'Arblay St
Dean Street Townhouse - Great for breakfast - 69 - 71 Dean St
Fernandez & Wells - Very good sandwiches and coffee - 73 Beak St
Street Food Union - Great street food market - Rupert St
Maison Bertaux - Very cute patisserie - 28 Greek St
The Ivy - Great dinner - 5 West St
La Bodega Negra - Mexican - 16 Moor St
Patty & Bun - Very good hamburgers - 18 Old Compton St
Burger & Lobster - Great combo - 36-38 Dean St
Le Relais de Venise - Great french style Entrecote - 50 Dean St
Little Pitt - Ribs time - 1 Newburgh St
Pizza Pilgrims - Great pizza. Love their Kingly Court location - Kingly Court, 11 Kingly St or 11 Dean St
Kingly Court - Great choice of restaurants
Honest Burgers - My fav burger place in London - 4A Meard St

Camden Town and Shoreditch

Camden Town is full with second hand shops and music shops. It's one of London more 'alternative' neighbourhoods and definitely worth a visit. Also visit the Camden Market for great finds. If you get hungry I can recommend Honest Burger. Nearest underground station is Camden Town.

Shoreditch is definitely a hipster place. You can expect 100% locals, no tourists. It's also a great place for street food: Boxpark, Pump Street Foodmarket or Dinerama to name a few places. There is no underground to Shoreditch but you can go there by Overground. Get off at Shoreditch High Street or Old Street.

Some spots I can recommend:

The Breakfast Club - Legendary breakfast spot - 2-4 Rufus St
Ozone Coffee Roasters - Very good coffee and food - 11 Leonard St
Grind - One of my fav's in London - 213 Old St
Albion - Good for any time during the day - 2-4 Boundary St
Pizza East - Great pizzas- 56A Shoreditch High St
Honest Burgers - 6 Baldwin St
Dishoom - Indian cuisine - 7 Boundary St

Southbank

You'll be spending most of the time on the other side of the Thames but don't forget to cross one of the bridges and have a look at Southbank and its surrounding neighborhoods. For example start your walk at Embarkment towards Hangerford Bridge and cross the bridge enjoying the great view. On your right you'll see important sights like London Eye, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey while on your left you'll have Southbank. Your first stop should be the Tate Modern, a great contemporary art museum. Also don't miss the view deck from the 10th floor of the Tate Modern Annex building. After visiting the Tate we continued our walk towards Borough Market. Here you can go wild in terms of street food. It's a must visit when in London. We took the Millennium Bridge to get back to the other side with views of the Tower Bridge and the beautiful St. Pauls cathedral just in front of you. If you're not into walking you can take a boat which goes from Westminster to Tower Bridge's (Tower Pier station). Closest underground stations: Waterloo, Southwark or London Bridge.

Hotspots

Monmouth - Best coffee in London - 2 Park St

The Breakfast Club - Legendary breakfast spot - 11 Southwark St

London Grind - Very nice cafe - 2 London Bridge

Padella - Homemade pasta - 6 Southwark St

The Globe Tavern - Pub - 8 Bedale St

Founders Arm - Nice pub with view over the Thames - 52 Hopton St

Flat Iron Square - Small street food place - 68 Union St

Shangri La at The Shard - Afternoon tea on the 52nd floor - 31 St Thomas St

Notting Hill

Notting Hill is in my opinion the cutest neighbourhood of London. The pastel painted houses, the many small boutiques and cafes and its tranquility make Notting Hill perfect for a morning stroll on a sunny day followed by a great breakfast. It's definitely an area you should visit during daytime since there's not much going on in the evening. You should also not miss the Portobello Street Market on Portobello Street where you can find awesome antiques and gifts. Nearest underground stations are Notting Hill Gate or Bayswater. Here are some places I can recommend you in the area.

Granger & Co - My favourite breakfast spot in London - 175 Westbourne Grove

Farm Girl - Great for breakfast - 59A Portobello Rd

Gail's Bakery - Nice bakery - 138 Portobello Rd

Restaurant 202 - Liked breakfast, also good for lunch - 202 Westbourne Grove

Ottolenghi - London classic, grab a quick lunch - 63 Ledbury Rd

Honest Burgers - My fav burger place in London - 189 Portobello Rd

London House Hotel - We stayed at this cute hotel. Prices are very reasonable and hotel is really good - 81 Kensington Gardens Square