

THE MANY FACES OF LONDON: A BRIEF LANDMARKS GUIDE



Visitors to the UK capital will often note how fond Londoners are of quoting Samuel Johnson. He famously said: “When a man is tired of London he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.” The city does offer a bewildering range of choice for visitors: potter round an antique market or join a colourful street carnival? Go for afternoon tea at the Ritz or drop into a darkened rock bar for something stronger? Each district of London has its own character. Book an apartment with OH-London to get a slice of living as an honorary Londoner in one of the city’s distinct areas.

Westminster

No first-time visitor to London should consider their trip complete without ticking off the most essential sights the city contains. Tourists may crowd the gates of Buckingham Palace, throng Downing Street and mob the Houses of Parliament, but these monuments of London’s status as a royal and administrative capital are imposing enough to justify such drawbacks. Visit early in the morning or at non-peak season to beat the crowds, and take a break from sightseeing with a stroll along the River Thames.

Soho & Chinatown

Once you’ve taken in the official grandeur of London’s political heart, discover its fun side in the neighbouring districts of Soho and Chinatown. This area is packed with lively bars, shops and restaurants. Soho is also famous for its many gay venues, while Chinatown – unsurprisingly – is a Mecca for lovers of Oriental cuisine. Head here after dark to get a taste of London nightlife, and to see the famous animated billboards of Piccadilly Circus illuminating the statue of Eros.

Chelsea

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, to give it its full name, is well-established as London’s most expensive and exclusive district. Filled with elegant townhouses and leafy streets, this zone is the perfect place for a weekend walk in the sunshine. If the rain should strike, you have the perfect excuse to drop into one of the borough’s precious antique shops, upmarket restaurants or traditional tea shops.

Camden Town

If your style is more tattoos and piercings than ascots and blazers, then get on the tube in the opposite direction. The Northern Line takes you to Camden Town, whose high street is an explosive celebration of ‘alternative’ culture. Wander among buildings decorated with skulls and snarling

dragons, get lost among the many ethnic food stalls by the canal at Camden Lock, and dip into the vintage clothing markets to pick up your very own piece of anti-establishment gear.

Brick Lane

Today's UK is a cultural melting pot, and one of the nation's favourite dishes is a South Asian creation: curry. Where better to discover this than an area rich in ethnic heritage? Located in the East End, Brick Lane is home to a host of Indian and Bengali restaurants, as well as a growing avant-garde art and fashion scene, including graffiti from the likes of famous Londoner, Banksy.

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