

A WEEKEND IN: *london*

By Mike Klozar

Have you dreamed of visiting London, but felt it would take a week or longer to sample its historic sites? Think again. You can experience some of London's best in just a couple of days.

Day One.

- Thames River Walk. Take a famous London Black Cab to the Tower of London. The ride is an experience, not just a taxi. (15-30 min.)
- Explore the Tower of London. Keep your tour short, but be sure to check out the Crown Jewels. (1-2 hrs.)
- Walk across the Tower Bridge. It's the fancy blue one. (15 min.) From here you get the best view of the Tower of London for photos.
- Cross over to Butler's Wharf and enjoy lunch at one of the riverfront restaurants near where Bridget lived in Bridget Jones's Diary. (1.5 hrs.)
- Keeping the Thames on your right, you'll come to the warship HMS Belfast. Tours daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (30 min.-1 hr.)
- Walk up London Bridge Street to find The Borough Market. Used in countless films, it is said to be the city's oldest fruit and vegetable market, dating from the mid-1200s. (1 hr.)
- Back on the river, you'll discover a tiny ship tucked into the docks: a replica of Sir Francis Drake's Golden Hind, which braved pirates in the days of yore. (15 min.)
- Notable London pubs are situated along the route and are good for a pint, a cup of tea and a deserved break. Kids are welcome.
- Continue on to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, rebuilt recently to its original splendor. A tour of the building is well worth it. (1 hr.)
- Tate Modern. A massive power station is now home to the world's largest Modern Art gallery. Up top is a café. On your right is the contemporary Millennium Bridge. Modern marvel or sadly unattractive—you decide. (30 min.)
- Around the bend towers the newly famous London Eye. Built for the millennium celebration, the Ferris wheel boasts non-stop glass capsules. Buy tickets online beforehand. (1-2 hrs.)
- Cross the Westminster Bridge to Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. (1 hr.)

- Dinner—Duck into an Indian curry house for a truly British experience. Gratuity is included.

Day Two.

London's fantastic museums, markets and theaters beckon. Try to squeeze in several—or leisurely explore just a few.

- London Theatre. Plan ahead. Discount tickets should be purchased in Leicester Square (open 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Mon.-Sat., noon-7 p.m. Sun.) at the official TKTS office or visit theater box offices. Times and prices are posted. Beware of unofficial half-price ticket vendors, whose prices will be higher. (1 hr.)
- Buckingham Palace. Get there by 11 a.m. to watch the changing of the guard. (1 hr.)
- British Museum. (Free) Tucked away off Russell Square, view the Rosetta Stone and an amazing cache of Greek, Egyptian and Old World artifacts. (1-3 hrs.)
- Victoria and Albert. Giant columns and ancient sculptures are reconstructed complete to scale. Kids love it.
- Late Lunch—Harrods' Food Hall. Superb building, and the food hall is a treat. (1 hr.)
- Piccadilly Circus. London's Times Square is a carnival of cars and crowds. (20 min.)
- Trafalgar Square. Famous fountains and lots of pigeons. (20 min.)
- Covent Garden. The old market in central London features street performers, shops and restaurants. Best in the evening before the theater and a close walk to Leicester Square. (1 hr.)
- London Theatre. Arrive on time, most shows begin promptly. Dress casual. (3-4 hrs.)
- Dinner—Many great Central London restaurants are open late for "theater hours."
- St. Paul's Cathedral. Best to view at night when brilliantly lit. (1 hr.)

Additional information on each site above

Tower of London

Founded by William the Conqueror in 1066-7 and enlarged and modified by successive sovereigns, today the Tower of London is one of the world's most famous and spectacular fortresses. Discover its 900-year history as a royal palace and fortress, prison and place of execution, mint, arsenal, menagerie and jewel house.

Tower Bridge

The Tower Bridge has stood over the River Thames in London since 1894 and is one of the finest, most recognizable bridges in the world. At the Tower Bridge Exhibition you can enjoy breathtaking views from the high-level walkways and learn about the history of the Bridge and how it was built. You can then visit the Victorian Engine Rooms, home to the original steam engines that used to power the bridge lifts.

Tower Bridge walkways have specially designed windows, giving visitors a unique opportunity to take photos of the views without them obscured by glass.

Butler's Wharf

Completed in 1873, Butler's Wharf was once the largest warehouse complex on the Thames. Having remained derelict after closure in 1972, this early SE1 development is perhaps best known for Terence Conran's restaurants <http://www.conran.co.uk> such as Le Pont de la Tour, where the Clintons and Blairs famously dined. The Wharf also is home to gastronomic delights such as the Butler's Wharf Chop House, Cantina del Ponte, Bengal Clipper, Captain Tony's Pizza & Pasta Emporium and Pizza Express. Conran's acclaimed Design Museum also houses the Blue Print Cafe.

You will probably recognize the area's main thoroughfare, Shad Thames, from countless photographs and films of London's gloomy docks in years gone by (there are some good photos of the area in the 1970s on this site). The distinctive iron bridges in Shad Thames were once used for moving goods from warehouse to warehouse and have been retained as part of the redevelopment.

HMS Belfast

HMS Belfast is the largest surviving example of Britain's 20-century naval power and is now a museum moored on the Thames between Tower and London Bridge. She was the first ship to be saved for the nation since Nelson's HMS Victory due to her historical importance.

Best known for her role in supporting the advancing Allied troops as they made their way onto Gold and Juno beaches on the morning of D-Day, June 6, 1944, HMS Belfast is now a naval time capsule, providing nine decks of living history to explore.

The HMS Belfast experience provides living testament to her illustrious service, her battle stories and the conditions in which up to 950 crew members lived and fought in until her retirement from the Royal Navy in 1965.

Over 6 million people have visited her since she became an Imperial War Museum site in 1978.

Borough Market

Borough Market offers a tempting mix of traditional, modern and gourmet food.

The market has been in its current location since 1756 and remains a center of food excellence. Records can be traced back to 1014 and indicate that from its beginning the market sold vegetables as well as fish, grain and cattle, earning it the nickname "London's Larder."

The market has a deep-rooted history in feeding travelers. It was the point from which Chaucer's pilgrims set out on their journey to Canterbury and the meeting point of all roads from the South Coast and Southern Counties into the City of London. With plenty of ready-to-eat hot and cold snacks on offer, you're likely to leave the market with a full stomach as well as a full basket.

The Golden Hind

A full-size replica of Sir Francis Drake's 16th century galleon, in demand for filming, weddings and corporate entertainment. The replica itself has travelled the world, having covered over 140,000 miles under sail. Crew members are in period dress and there are five decks of exhibits and artifacts.

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

Set against the historical background of Elizabethan Bankside (the City of London's playground in Shakespeare's time) this is one of the finest spaces in the world for watching theater, and also one of the most astonishing buildings in London. With stunning wooden timbers and a fantastic thatched roof (the first in London to receive planning permission since 1666 and the Great Fire), there is little to separate it from the original. Similarly, in keeping with the fashion of the time, both the theater's stage and seating are outdoors. The season traditionally runs from May to September or October each year and usually mixes Shakespearian classics with period dramas by playwrights. The standard of performance is consistently high and reassuringly traditional in its approach. Exhibitions, lectures, workshops and walking tours provide year-round interest. The Globe offers a superb historic, theatrical and architectural experience.

Tate Modern

Tate Modern is the national gallery of international modern art. Located in London, it is one of the family of four Tate galleries that display selections from the Tate collection. The Collection comprises the national collection of British art from the year 1500 to the present day, and of international modern art. The other three galleries are Tate Britain (see below), also in London, Tate Liverpool, in the northwest, and Tate St Ives, in Cornwall, in the southwest.

Created in the year 2000 from a disused power station in the heart of London, Tate Modern displays the national collection of international modern art. This is defined as art since 1900. International painting pre-1900 is found at the National Gallery, and sculpture at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Tate Modern includes modern British art, where it contributes to the story of modern art, so major modern British artists may be found at both Tate Modern and Tate Britain.

Tate Britain Art Gallery

Tate Britain exhibits British art from 1500 to the present day. Tate holds the largest collection of British art, including major works by Blake, Constable, Epstein, Gainsborough, Gilbert and George, Hatoum, Hirst, Hockney, Hodgkin, Hogarth, Moore, Rossetti, Sickert, Spencer, Stubbs Turner and more.

Tate Britain has a program of free guided tours, gallery talks, lectures and films, every day of the week.

There are also study days, courses and conferences designed for anyone who has an interest in the history of modern or contemporary art.

London Eye

The British Airways London Eye is the world's tallest observation wheel at 440 feet high. Located on the banks of the River Thames, it offers unrivalled views over London.

Since opening at the turn of the century, the London Eye has become an iconic landmark, with a status that can be compared to Tower Bridge, Big Ben, Eros and the Tower of London. It has been used as a backdrop in countless films and for innumerable TV programs. A source of pride for the whole country, as well as the capital, the London Eye is one of the most distinctive additions this century to London, loved by Britons and tourists alike.

In fact, in its short life, the London Eye has become the most popular paid-for UK visitor attraction,

visited by over 3.5 million people a year (an average of 10,000 a day). A breathtaking feat of design and engineering, passengers in the London Eye's capsules can see up to 25 miles in all directions, in complete comfort and safety. Book London Eye Tickets at http://www.londoneye.com/VisitorInformation_hb.aspx?sec=vi&productid=414

Houses of Parliament

Parliament is open to all members of the UK public and overseas visitors. You can watch laws being made, attend debates and committees, tour the buildings, or climb the Clock Tower.

The House of Commons and House of Lords meet in the Palace of Westminster, located next to the River Thames in London. Although still a Royal Palace, the last monarch to live here, Henry VIII, moved out in 1512. Parliament has met in the Palace of Westminster since around 1550.

There has been a royal palace on this site for nearly 1,000 years, but most of the current building dates from the middle of the 19th century, when the palace was rebuilt after a fire destroyed most of the earlier medieval buildings in 1834. The palace is divided into three areas reflecting the three parts of Parliament: the Royal Apartments, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

Theater Tickets – tkts booths

Cheap theater tickets are available for a wide selection of West End shows on the day of the performance. For a list of the day's shows, visit the What's on Sale Today page at <http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/tkts/today>

You cannot book ahead as tkts only sells discount theater tickets for performances the same day, and tickets must be purchased in person. Most tickets are sold at exactly half price plus a service charge of £2.50 per ticket. Some additional shows may also be available at a 25% discount or at full price, giving you the broadest choice of cheap on-the-day theater tickets available in London. Payment is by cash (US or Euros), credit card or debit card (MasterCard, Visa), (checks and travelers checks are not accepted.)

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace has served as the official London residence of Britain's sovereigns since 1837. It evolved from a town house that was owned from the beginning of the 18th century by the Dukes of Buckingham. Today it is the Queen's official residence, with 775 rooms. Although in use for the many official events and receptions held by the Queen, areas of Buckingham Palace are opened to visitors on a regular basis.

The State Rooms of the Palace are open to visitors during the Annual Summer Opening in August and September. They are lavishly furnished with some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection—paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer, Poussin, Canaletto and Claude; sculptures by Canova and Chantrey; exquisite examples of Sèvres porcelain; and some of the finest English and French furniture in the world.

British Museum

The British Museum in London is one of the world's largest and most important museums of human history and culture. Its collections, which number more than 7 million objects from all continents, illustrate and document the story of human culture from its beginning to the present. As with all other

national museums and art galleries in Britain, the museum charges no admission fee, although entrance fees are charges for some temporary special exhibitions.

Victoria and Albert Museum

Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone of the museum on May 17, 1899. The V&A has a collection of more than 4 million objects. The Victoria & Albert Museum in London is the world's largest museum of the decorative arts and has 146 galleries, including national collections of sculpture, furniture, fashion and photographs. It also houses the National Art Library and manages the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood, the Wellington Museum at Apsley House and the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden. Click here for more information. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/>

Piccadilly Circus

Piccadilly Circus is an intersection where five roads meet, it is most famous for the elegant statue of Eros, the god of love, and the advertising signs that light up the sky at night. If you are looking to go shopping, it is a good place to start, as Regent Street, Piccadilly and Shaftsbury Avenue all lead off of Piccadilly Circus.

Harrod's

Harrod's has long been a bastion of style and taste in London. While browsing through the Prada bags and Pucci shoes, don't miss the giant food hall. Take a gander at the amazing and sometimes obscure produce and meats, and don't miss the new tea room—its right out of some children's book illustration. Have your choice of sushi at the bar, or tuck in to a meal at one of the many eateries on the floor. You don't have to spend eight pounds on a mini box of wild strawberries to enjoy the experience, although it might be hard to leave without buying a selection of chocolates or a souvenir tin of tea.

St. Paul's Cathedral

St Paul's, with its world-famous dome, is an iconic feature of the London skyline, but there is so much more to Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece than its impressive facade. The interior, with it's glittering mosaics, intricate stone carving, and breathtaking vantage points, are just a few of the reasons why a visit to St Paul's is a must.

With it's historic £40 million restoration program now nearing completion, there has never been a better time to visit St Paul's. For the first time in its 300-year history, the cathedral has been comprehensively cleaned and repaired inside and out, and the results are truly astounding. Transformed by state-of-the-art restoration techniques, the light that now floods the space highlights the luminescent Portland stone and brings mosaics, carvings and sculptures to life.

Covent Garden

Covent Garden sits right in the heart London and is the center for entertainment and leisure activities in the capital. Covent Garden's street entertainers, great restaurants and exciting bars make this the most vibrant areas of the city. Theatreland surrounds Covent Garden, and for shoppers, the area is well known for its wide range of unique boutiques.