

London sightseeing tour

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This is a rough map of London





London has many interesting places to visit and some of the finest parks in the world. Have a look at it. Walk the streets. You can see the Houses of Parliament, the famous clock tower Big Ben, the Tower, the London Eye!

Big Ben

- The famous clock big Ben stands near the Houses of Parliament. Big Ben is a big bell. The clock has four faces and five big bells. The biggest bell is known as Big Ben.



- The bell is named after Sir Benjamin Hall; the first commissioner (уполномоченный) of works when the Houses of Parliament were rebuilt in 1850. He was a tall man, whose nickname was Big Ben.





- So people know the clock as Big Ben. You hear it every hour. The bell weighs 13 720 kilograms. It has a deep tone and you can hear it on the radio: “This is BBC. The time is six o’clock”. And then you hear the deep boom of Big Ben of six times.



- Big Ben looks most attractively at night when the clock faces are illuminated. You even know when parliament is in session, because a light shines above the clock face.



Questions

- 1. Where does Big Ben stand?
- 2. Who was the bell named after?
- 3. Who was Ser Benjamin Hall?



Buckingham Palace

- Buckingham Palace is the Queen's official London residence and is used to receive and entertain guests on state, ceremonial and official occasions for Royal Family. The Queen has four palaces in Britain.



- The Buckingham Palace is located between the Green Park, Hyde Park and St. James's Park. During August and September you can go inside Buckingham Palace.



- The Palace is very big. You can see 19 of the rooms, ballroom and gardens, the gallery with the Royal family's greatest treasures including paintings and finest French and English furniture. If the Queen's flag is flying outside the palace, it means that the Queen is at home.



Questions

- 1. What is the Queen's official residence?
- Where is Buckingham Palace located?
- When can guests go inside Buckingham Palace?



10 Downing Street

- 10 Downing street is the residence and office of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the headquarters of Her Majesty's Government.



- Downing Street is located in the Whitehall in the central London, a few minutes' walk from the Houses of Parliament and a little farther from Buckingham Palace. It is actually the official residence of the First Lord of Treasury, but in modern times this post has always been simultaneously with the office of Prime Minister.



Questions

- 1. Where is Downing Street located?
- 2. Whose residence is in 10 Downing Street?
- 3. How far is it from the Houses of Parliament?



Trafalgar Square

- Trafalgar Square is the geographical centre of London. It was so named to commemorate Admiral Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar.



- In the middle of the square there is a very famous monument Nelson's Column with the statue of Lord Horatio Nelson on the top. The Column is over 170 feet high.



Its pedestal is decorated with bas-reliefs of famous naval battles. At the base of Nelson's column are four great lions.

- Trafalgar Square has become famous as a point for all kinds of demonstrations, marches and political meetings.
- Each year in December, the people of Norway send a gift of an enormous Christmas tree to Britain which is erected in Trafalgar Square. This is thanks for Britain's part in liberation during the Second World War.



Questions

- 1. Why was Trafalgar Square so named?
- 2. Where is the Column of Nelson situated?
- 3. What can you tell about Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square?



London Eye

- The London Eye is a giant observation wheel situated on the bank of the river Thames. It is 135 meters high. As the wheel turns it stops to allow tourists to see fantastic views over the city. It takes half an hour for the London Eye to complete one rotation.



- Since opening in March 2000 the London Eye has become a symbol of modern Britain. The London Eye is visited by over 3.5 million people a year.



- The wheel carries 32 sealed and air-conditioned egg-shaped passenger capsules. Each 10 tones capsule holds 25 people, who are free to walk around inside the capsule, though seating is provided.



Questions

- 1. Where is the London Eye situated?
- 2. Since what time has the London Eye become a symbol of modern Britain?
- 3. How many tourists visit the London Eye a year?
- 4. How many passengers does the wheel carry?



Tower Bridge

- Tower Bridge is the most famous bridge in London over the River Thames. It is close to the Tower of London, which gives it its name. Sir John Wolfe Barry designed it.



- The bridge consists of two towers which are tied together. The bridge was officially opened on 30 June 1894 by the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII), and his wife.



- The bridge is 244 m (800 feet) in length with two towers each 65 m (213 feet) high.
- Thousands of tourists visit Tower Bridge every year.



Questions

- 1. What is the most famous bridge in London?
- 2. How did it get its name?
- 3. When was Tower Bridge officially opened?
- 4. Who designed Tower Bridge?



Tower of London. The White Tower

- The Tower of London is one of the most imposing and popular of London's historical sites. Now it is the museum. It comprises 20 towers. The oldest is the White Tower, dates back to the 11th century and the time of William the Conqueror.



- Nowadays a lot of tourists visit the Tower of London, because of the Tower's evil reputation as a prison. The Tower has got Beefeaters, ravens, the Crown Jewels. The royal Crown has got three hundred jewels on it and the celebrated Indian diamond.



- Many stories associated with British history come from the Tower. In 1483 King Edward IV's two sons were murdered in the so-called Bloody Tower. Over two centuries later the skeletons of two little boys were found buried beneath steps in the White Tower.



- The ravens, huge black birds, are an official part of the Tower . Legend states that if the ravens were to leave the Tower the Crown will fall and Britain with it. Under the special care of the Raven Master, the ravens eat raw meat every day. And there is no danger of them flying away, because their wings are clipped.



Questions

- 1. What is the most imposing and popular historical sites in London?
- 2. How many towers does the Tower of London comprise?
- 3. When was the Tower of London founded?
- What is the Tower of London famous for?



Palace of Westminster, Westminster Bridge

- The Palace of Westminster also known as the Houses of Parliament is the seat of Britain's two parliamentary houses, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.
- In the middle of the 11th century, King Edward the Confessor had moved his court to the Palace of Westminster, situated on the central site near the river Thames.



- In 1265 a parliament was created with two houses: the Lords and the Commons. The House of Lords met at the Palace of Westminster while the House of Commons did not have a permanent location. After King Henry VIII moved his court to Whitehall Palace in 1530, the House of Lords continued to meet in Westminster. In 1547, the House of Commons also moved here, confirming Westminster as the central seat of government, a position it still holds today.



The House of Lords

- The tower opposite Big Ben is the Victoria Tower, built in the 1860. The tower contains the records of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons since 1497. During the parliamentary year the Union Flag is hoisted on the top of the 98m tall tower.
- The Queen, who is the Head of State, opens and closes Parliament. All new laws are discussed by MPs in the Commons, then debated in the Lords, and finally signed by the Queen. All three are part of Parliament in Britain.



- Westminster Bridge is a road and foot traffic bridge over the River Thames. For over 500 years, the nearest bridge to London Bridge was at Kingston. Proposals for a bridge at Westminster had been made as early as 1664.





- The current bridge was designed by Thomas Page and opened in 1862. The bridge is painted green, the same colour as the leather seats in the House of Commons which is on the side of Palace of Westminster nearest the bridge. This is in contrast to Lambeth Bridge which is red, the same colour as the seats in the House of Lords and is the opposite side of the Houses of Parliament.



- It links the Palace of Westminster on the west side of the river with County Hall and the London Eye on the east and was the finishing point during the early years of the London Marathon.



Questions

- 1. Where is the seat of Britain's two parliamentary houses?
- 2. What is opposite Big Ben?
- 3. When was the Victoria Tower built?
- Who is the Head of State?
- What does Westminster Bridge link?



The Globe Theatre

- The Globe theatre has long been associated with William Shakespeare belonged, opened in 1559.



- Unfortunately, the original Globe Theatre burn to the ground during a performance of Shakespeare's Henry VII in 1997. It is located on Bankside, about 183 meters from the original site. It was the first buildings with a thatched roof allowed to be built in London since the Great Fire of 1666.



- Similar to the original, the stage of the new Globe Theater extends into a large circular yard, which is surrounded by three tiers of very steep seating. The most expensive seats are covered. All others are exposed, which is why plays are held here only during the summer months. Additional standing erect during the production.



Questions

- 1. With what name is the Globe Theater associated?
- 2. Where is the Globe Theatre located?
- 3. Why are plays held only during the summer months?



Westminster Abbey

- Westminster Abbey is a Gothic monastery church in London that is the traditional place of coronation and burial for English monarchs. Westminster Abbey is famous for its architecture, for its historic associations.



- Westminster Abbey has its world famed Poet's corner where many of the greatest English writers are buried: Chaucer, Ch. Dickens, Tennyson, Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling. Here, too, are to the great American poet Longfellow. Westminster Abbey is a place of worship owned by the royal family.



Questions

- 1. Is Westminster Abbey a church or a palace?
- 2. What is Westminster Abbey famous for?
- 3. Who is buried in Westminster Abbey?



30 St. Mary Axe

- 30 St. Mary Axe Building is a skyscraper in London's main financial district, the City of London.
- Originally known as the Swiss Re building, it was later renamed to its street address 30 St. Mary Axe after Swiss Re sold the building in 2007. Even before its construction was complete Londoners nicknamed the building the "Gherking" for its distinctive shape, and it is still known by that name.



- The skyscraper was built in 2004 after a modern glass and steel design by the architectural firm of Foster and Partners. With 41 floors, the tower is 180 meters (591 ft) tall. The cigar-shaped structure has steel frame with circular floor plans and a glass facade with diamond-shaped panels.



- The top of the tower, where visitors find an open hall covered by a glass conical dome is spectacular. From here you have great views over the city. The building is not open to the public. Its unique and efficient design has won the Gherkin many awards.



Questions

- 1. What is the nickname of the building?
- 2. Who nicknamed the St. Mary Axe Building the “Gherkin” and why?
- 3. St. Mary Axe Building is a skyscraper, isn't it?
- What is at the top of the building?



St. Paul's Cathedral

- The city's greatest monument, St. Paul's Cathedral was built by Christopher Wren between 1675 and 1710. Unfortunately Christopher Wren died before the completion. He is buried there.



- The Cathedral is one of the Europe's largest cathedrals and it is second in size only to St. Peter's in Rome. The famous dome reaches a height of 111 meter (366 ft) and weight about 66,000 tons. On top of the dome is a large lantern with a weight of 850 tons.



- 560 steps lead visitors along three galleries all the way to the top of the dome. The first gallery, the Whispering Gallery, just inside the dome, is renowned for its acoustics. The second gallery, the Stone Gallery, is situated at a height of 53 meter (174 ft) on the outside of the dome, right on top of the colonnade. On top of the dome, at a height of 85 meter (279 ft), is the narrow Golden Gallery, encircling the lantern's base. Here you have a magnificent view over the City.



- The church was the site of a number of important historic events such as the funeral of Admiral Nelson in 1806 and the funeral of Winston Churchill in 1965. Prince Charles and Diana Spencer married here in 1981.



Questions

- 1. Who built St. Paul's Cathedral?
- 2. When was it built?
- 3. What historic events were in St. Paul's Cathedral?





If I had an English accent

The end

I'd never shut up