

An aerial photograph of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, showing its two prominent towers with golden finials and a large clock face on the left tower. The cathedral's white stone contrasts with the surrounding city's varied architecture and the grey roofs of the surrounding buildings. In the background, the River Thames flows, and the London Eye is visible on the left. The sky is filled with dramatic, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day.

SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF LONDON

BY JULIE DAVIE



London is the capital of England and the United Kingdom, the largest metropolitan area in the United Kingdom and the largest urban zone in the European Union by most measures.

London is a leading global city, with its strengths in the arts, commerce, education, entertainment, fashion, finance, healthcare, media, professional services, research and development, tourism and transport all contributing to its prominence.

But I would like to tell you about the main places of interest, the proud of the country, the great architecture monuments and the most picturesque ancient buildings of the city and the country.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Westminster Abbey is one of the most famous, historic and widely visited churches not only in Britain but in the whole Christian world.

There are some reasons for its fame apart from its beauty and its vital role as a centre of the Christian faith in one of the world's most important capital cities. These include the facts that since 1066 every sovereign apart from Edward Y and Edward YIII has been crowned here and that for many centuries it was also the burial place of kings, queens and princes.

Since the coronations in 1066 of both King Harold and William the Conqueror, coronations of English and British monarchs were held in the Abbey.

The Westminster Abbey Museum is located in the 11th-century vaulted undercroft beneath the former monks' dormitory in Westminster Abbey. This is one of the oldest areas of the Abbey, dating back almost to the foundation of the Norman church by Edward the Confessor in 1065. This space has been used as a museum since 1908.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE



Buckingham Palace has served as the official London residence of Britain's sovereigns since 1837 and today is the administrative headquarters of the Monarch.

Although in use for the many official events and receptions held by The Queen, the State Rooms at Buckingham Palace are open to visitors every year.

Buckingham Palace has 775 rooms.

The Palace is very much a working building and the centerpiece of Britain's constitutional monarchy. It houses the offices of those who support the day-to-day activities and duties of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh and their immediate family.

The Palace is also the venue for great Royal ceremonies, State Visits and Investitures, all of which are organized by the Royal Household.

More than 50,000 people visit the Palace each year as guests to banquets, lunches, dinners, receptions and the Royal Garden Parties

TOWER OF LONDON

Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress, more commonly known as the Tower of London, is a historic castle on the north bank of the River Thames in central London, England.

The ancient stones reverberate with dark secrets, priceless jewels glint in fortified vaults and ravens strut the grounds. The Tower of London, founded by William the Conqueror in 1066, holds some of the most remarkable stories from across the centuries. Despite a grim reputation as a place of torture and death, this powerful and enduring fortress has been enjoyed as a royal palace, served as an armoury and for a number of years even housed a zoo!

Gaze up at the massive White Tower, tiptoe through a king's medieval bedchamber and marvel at the priceless Crown Jewels. The famous Yeoman Warders have bloody tales to tell; stand where heads rolled and prisoners wept.

The Tower held many famous prisoners, from the highest levels of society; some in astonishing comfort and others less so... Visit the places of their confinement and read the graffiti left by prisoners from over 500 years ago. .





HYDE PARK

Hydre Park is one of the Royal Parks (owned by the monarchy) and is one of the most popular parks in London and covers an area of 350 acres.

Wide open spaces, horse riding, bird sanctuary, snack bars, education centre, tennis courts, Bowling green, a gallery, boating and Kensington Place at its South West corner make this a great place to spend some time.

The Serpentine Lake at the heart of the park was constructed in the 1730's by Queen Caroline. Since 1814 when Prince Regent held a fireworks exhibition as a celebration of the ending of the Napoleonic wars the park has been a venue for events in the capital. It was the original site for the Crystal Palace while Pop concerts and rallies are often held here.

There is talk that the Notting Hill carnival may be extended or moved to the park. Roller blading has become very popular in Hyde Park and along with cycling is allowed on designated sections.

The North East corner is known as Speakers Corner and has its own particular history.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

St Paul's is not only an iconic part of the London skyline but also a symbol of the hope, resilience and strength of the city and nation it serves. Above all, St Paul's Cathedral is a lasting monument to the glory of God.

A Cathedral dedicated to St Paul has stood on this site since 604AD, and throughout the Cathedral has remained a busy, working church where millions come to reflect and find peace.

Over the centuries, St Paul's has changed to reflect shifting tastes and attitudes. Decoration has been added and removed, services have been updated, and different areas have been put to new uses. Today, the history of the nation is written in the carved stone of its pillars and arches and is celebrated in its works of art and monuments.

Its rich and diverse history means there is lots for visitors to the Cathedral to discover, for more information about visiting St Paul's go to our Visits and Events pages.



TRAFALGAR SQUARE



Trafalgar Square, set in central London, is one of Britain's great tourist attractions. A visit to the capital would be incomplete without going to marvel at Nelson's Column and the four giant lions at its base, or to admire the lovely splashing fountains and to feed the pigeons, who have made their home here. Built to commemorate Admiral Nelson, the square was named after the Spanish Cape Trafalgar where his last battle was won.

Trafalgar Square is used for a wide range of events and activities throughout the year, including rallies and demonstrations, filming and photographic shoots, and promotional and performance based events.

The Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square is the location for specially commissioned art works.

Trafalgar square also contains a large number of statues and two fountains by Sir Edwin Lutyens, added in 1939. The square is surrounded by many great buildings. On the north side is the neo-classical National Gallery

When we think of Paris, Rome, Madrid, Lisbon and other European capitals, we think of them as “cities”. When we think of the whole of modern London, the capital city of England and the United Kingdom, that great area covering several hundred square kilometers, we do not think of it as 'a city, not even as a city and its suburbs. Modern London is not one city that has steadily become larger through the centuries; it is a number of cities, towns, and villages that have, during the past centuries, grown together to make one vast urban area.

