



TRIP GLOBAL

4 Days in London: A Day-by-Day Itinerary

London, United Kingdom · May · 4 days

Tailored for groups - includes group activities, social dining, and group-friendly options

Four days in London with friends, from Borough Market and Tate Modern to Tower Bridge and Shad Thames. Expect a lot of walking along the Thames, plus a pub stop at the Lamb & Flag.

Open the interactive trip: live map, photos and links

Before you go:

Get a United Kingdom eSIM: data on landing

What this trip might cost, per person for 4 days, flights extra:

Budget \$300-380 · Mid-range \$510-710 · Comfort \$910-1,100

Opening hours, prices and transport change. Please double-check bookings and times before you go.

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

1

DAY 1

Borough Market, Tate Modern and the Thames

South Bank · 4 nights

2

DAY 2

Westminster Abbey and Trafalgar Square

3

DAY 3

British Museum, British Library and Covent Garden Pub

4

DAY 4

Shakespeare's Globe, Tower Bridge and Shad Thames

?

AFTER THE LAST DAY

Before you go: London

Borough Market, Tate Modern and the Thames

Arrival day: an easy start close to your stay

Sunrise 5:10 AM

Golden hour 7:56 PM

Sunset 8:45 PM

Your base for 4 nights: South Bank

Graze your way through Borough Market, see Tate Modern, then cross the Millennium Bridge and walk the river before dinner at Pizarro.

GO

12:30 PM · 50 minutes

Gatwick Airport to South Bank

Gatwick Express train to Victoria (35 minutes, £19.90), then a 10-minute walk or one stop on the District Line to Waterloo. From Waterloo, your hotel is a 5-minute walk south along the river.

- Gatwick Express Train · 30 minutes · \$25 one-way
- National Express Coach · 60-90 minutes · \$6-13
- Minicab/Uber · 45-60 minutes (traffic depends) · \$32-51

[Book a transfer](#)

PREFER A GUIDE? · 3 HOURS

Food tour of Borough Market and South Bank

Taste your way through London's best street food vendors, learn the market's 800-year history, and eat a lot.

[Book this tour](#)

1



2:00 PM · 90 minutes

Borough Market

\$19-32 per person for lunch or snacks · Open 10 AM-5 PM (most stalls); some open later

A sprawling covered market since 1014, packed with food stalls, delis and producers. Grab lunch from one of the vendors, or just wander and sample. A 7-minute walk from Waterloo station, south over London Bridge or along the river.

Insider tip: Go before 4 PM on a Friday to avoid the after-work crush. Skip the tourist stalls at the front; the real producers are deeper inside.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2



4:15 PM · 90 minutes

Tate Modern

Free (donations suggested \$6-12) · Open 10 AM-6 PM (Fri until 10 PM)

Free world-class contemporary art in a converted power station. Walk through the ground-floor turbine hall, then pick a floor and wander. Right next to Borough Market, a 2-minute walk north.

Insider tip: Head straight up to Level 5 for the best view of St Paul's Cathedral across the Thames. The queues move fast because entry is free.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 1: BOROUGH MARKET, TATE MODERN AND THE THAMES (CONTINUED)

3



7:30 PM · 45 minutes

Millennium Bridge to Thames Riverside Walk

Free

Walk the pedestrian bridge from Tate Modern towards St Paul's Cathedral at golden hour. Stop halfway for the light, then continue east along the South Bank towards Tower Bridge. A scenic 15-minute walk that ends near dinner.

Insider tip: Face west towards St Paul's as the light softens. The bridge fills with commuters at 5 PM, so starting at 7:30 keeps it quiet and golden.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4



8:15 PM · 90 minutes

Book ahead

Pizarro

\$32-51 per person for dinner

Spanish tapas restaurant with a riverside terrace. Book a table for 8:15 PM on the terrace if the weather holds. A 5-minute walk from the bridge, near the Thames riverside path.

Insider tip: Order the jamón ibérico, patatas bravas, and a bottle of Vermentino. The terrace views of Tower Bridge lit up at night are unbeatable.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

If you land early (optional, close to your stay, before the plan above)

Greenwich Park: Historic hilltop park with views over London, the Thames, and Greenwich. Visit the Royal Observatory or just walk the grounds. A 15-minute walk south-east from Waterloo via the Thames Clippers pier.

Shakespeare's Globe: Reconstructed 1599 theatre with tours and a museum. A 3-minute walk west from Tate Modern along the riverside.

[Open Day 1 as a route in Google Maps](#)

Where to stay in South Bank

Book a hotel or apartment on the South Bank side of the river, between Waterloo and Tower Bridge. You're steps from the markets, the Tate Modern, and the riverside walk. The Northern Line runs under Waterloo station if you need central London fast.

Hostel One London

Budget · Hostel · \$

Social hostel vibes, private rooms available. Walking distance to Borough and Tate Modern.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Tune Hotel London King's Cross

Budget · Hotel · \$

Budget-friendly pod rooms. Great for friends sharing. King's Cross location, quick tube anywhere.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Generator London

Budget · Hostel · \$

Bloomsbury location, private rooms available. Social vibe, cheap, near British Museum and tube.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Travelodge London Southwark

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Chain comfort, two minutes from Borough Market. No frills, excellent location.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Premier Inn London Southwark

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Reliable budget chain, riverside location. Standard rooms, good breakfast available.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

Travelodge London South Bank

Mid-range · Hotel · \$\$

Clean, central South Bank base. Easy walk to Westminster. No frills, solid value.

[Book now](#)

[Google Maps >](#)

[All stays in South Bank](#)

[Holiday rentals](#)

Where to eat

Monmouth Coffee

Cafe · Breakfast · \$

Single-origin espresso, pastries. Tiny spot, arrive by 8am or queue 20 mins.

[Google Maps >](#)

Pieminister

British Comfort Food · Lunch · \$\$

Savory pies at Borough Market stall. Grab Steak and Ale, eat by the Thames.

[Google Maps >](#)

Leon

Fast Casual · Dinner · \$

Healthy fast food chain. Quick refuel before evening walk, near Hayward Gallery.

[Google Maps >](#)

DAY 1: BOROUGH MARKET, TATE MODERN AND THE THAMES (CONTINUED)

TOURS & DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

3-4 HOURS

Tower of London and Crown Jewels

It's London's most famous historical site, the queues move steadily, and the Crown Jewels are genuinely awe-inspiring.

[Book now](#)

Westminster Abbey and Trafalgar Square

Sunrise 5:10 AM

Golden hour 7:56 PM

Sunset 8:45 PM

Sleep in South Bank · night 2 of 4

Look around the Palace of Westminster and the Abbey in the morning, stop for a pint at St Stephen Tavern, then finish at Trafalgar Square.

1



9:30 AM · 1.5 hours

Palace of Westminster

Free (exterior viewable, tours GBP 30-35/\$38-44)

The Gothic Revival seat of Parliament where you'll see the Commons and Lords debating real politics. Book a tour or catch a debate from the public gallery (free, but arrive by 2:30 PM for afternoon sessions). From South Bank, walk across Westminster Bridge (8 minutes) or take the District line one stop to Westminster.

Insider tip: Arrive before 10 AM to beat queues; debates are most lively Tuesday-Thursday, 2:30-10 PM.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

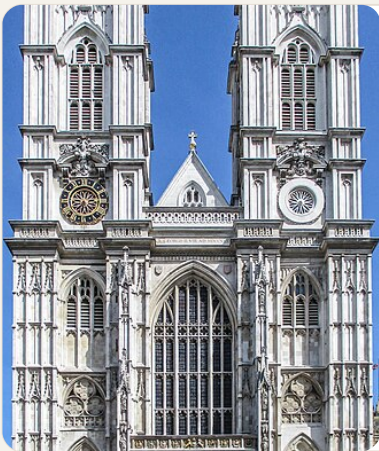
PREFER A GUIDE? · 2.5 HOURS

Westminster Abbey and Houses of Parliament guided walk

See where coronations happen and get inside Parliament if it's sitting; a guide makes the centuries of history click.

[Book this tour](#)

2



11:15 AM · 1.5 hours

Westminster Abbey

\$30 per person standard entry · Open 9:30 AM-4:30 PM (Wed until 7 PM)

Medieval abbey, royal weddings, and the tombs of monarchs, poets and scientists. The cloisters and Chapter House are quieter than the main church. A 5-minute walk south from Parliament.

Insider tip: Entry is £27, but visit the free cloisters and the small museum entrance first; avoid the main nave queue.

[Book tickets](#)

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3



1:00 PM · 1 hour

[Book ahead](#)

St Stephen Tavern

\$6-10 per person for a drink

Historic pub tucked into the Palace of Westminster building, serving proper British food and real ales. Order fish and chips or a beef pie. A 2-minute walk from the Abbey's north entrance.

Insider tip: Book a table online; it fills with MPs at lunch. The upstairs dining room is quieter.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 2: WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND TRAFALGAR SQUARE (CONTINUED)

4



2:30 PM · 1 hour

Trafalgar Square

Free

Grand civic space with Nelson's Column, galleries and street energy. Browse the National Gallery's free rooms if you have time, or just soak in the buzz. Walk north from the Abbey via Whitehall (12 minutes).

Insider tip: The north side of the square has the best light in late afternoon; street performers are good 3-5 PM.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

5



5:00 PM · 1 hour

Book ahead

Leicester Square Theatre

\$19-32 per person ticket · Open Varies by show; typically 2-3 PM matinees

Nerve centre of the West End: neon, marquees, tourists and theatres. Pick a show here or nearby (Shaftesbury Avenue, Old Compton Street). Walk north from Trafalgar Square (10 minutes) or take the Northern line.

Insider tip: Book West End tickets online at ATG Tickets or official theatre websites; day-of standby queues form at 10 AM.

[Book tickets](#)

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

6



6:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Book ahead

Dishoom Covent Garden

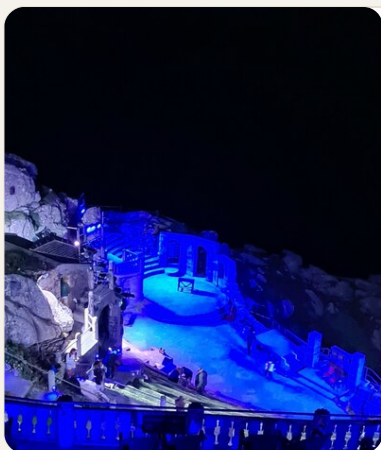
\$25-44 per person for dinner

Bombay-style restaurant with tandoor, paneer and cocktails. The room is theatrical and lively. Book for 6:30-7 PM to eat before an 8 PM curtain, or later if you prefer the show first. A 3-minute walk from Piccadilly Circus via Shaftesbury Avenue.

Insider tip: Reserve well ahead. Try the black dhal and ask for the house cocktail special.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

7



8:00 PM · 2.5 hours

Book ahead

West End Theatre Show

\$25-101 per ticket · Open Typically 7:30 PM or 8 PM curtain

An evening in one of London's playhouses. Major productions run nightly Tuesday-Sunday; matinées often available Wednesday and Saturday. Most theatres are within a 5-minute walk of Dishoom.

Insider tip: Dress code is casual; arrive 15 minutes early. Stalls seats (orchestra level) give the best view.

[Book tickets](#)

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

DAY 2: WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND TRAFALGAR SQUARE (CONTINUED)

Open Day 2 as a route in Google Maps

Where to eat

Breakfast Club

British breakfast · Breakfast · \$

Eggs, bacon, proper toast. Cosy corner spot before Westminster gets busy.

[Google Maps >](#)

Pret A Manger (Tottenham Court Road)

Sandwiches/Cafe · Lunch · \$

Quick, reliable, everywhere. Grab something between museums and grab the West End later.

[Google Maps >](#)

Dishoom Covent Garden

Indian · Dinner · \$\$

Spiced lamb chops, roomali wraps. Pre-theatre crowd, lively room, walk to theatres.

[Google Maps >](#)

British Museum, British Library and Covent Garden Pub

Sunrise 5:10 AM

Golden hour 7:56 PM

Sunset 8:45 PM

Sleep in South Bank · night 3 of 4

Spend the morning at the British Museum, walk over to the British Library, then browse Foyles and have a drink at the Lamb & Flag.

1



9:00 AM · 2.5 hours

British Museum

Free (donations suggested \$6-12) · **Open 9 AM-5:30 PM** (Fri until 8:30 PM)

Ten million objects spanning human history: Egyptian mummies, the Rosetta Stone, Greek sculpture. It's free and vast, so pick 2-3 galleries rather than rushing through. Get there by 9 AM to beat crowds. From South Bank, take the Piccadilly Line northbound from Embankment (5 minutes), then walk 5 minutes through Bloomsbury.

Insider tip: Head straight to Room 4 (Egypt) or Room 2a (Parthenon sculptures) before they fill up. Skip the main floor rotunda for now.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2



11:45 AM · 1.5 hours

British Library

Free (reading room access \$6/day) · **Open 9 AM-6 PM** (Tue-Thu until 8 PM)

Fourteen million books, manuscripts and maps in a red-brick building. See the handwritten Beatles lyrics, Magna Carta, and Jane Austen's letters in the free permanent exhibition. A 10-minute walk north from the British Museum through King's Cross.

Insider tip: The Treasures of the British Library gallery (free, ground floor) is the highlight. Queues are short mid-morning.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3



1:15 PM · 1 hour

Lamb & Flag

\$6-9 per person for a drink

Centuries-old timber pub tucked into a Covent Garden alley, packed with literary history and locals. Order a pint and the steak-and-ale pie. Walk south from the Library (15 minutes) through Bloomsbury to Covent Garden.

Insider tip: It's tiny and gets rammed at lunch. Eat at the bar or grab a spot upstairs to avoid the crush.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4



2:30 PM · 1.5 hours

Foyles Bookshop

Free · Open 9:30 AM-9 PM (Sun from 11 AM)

A five-storey independent bookshop crammed with fiction, history, and rare editions. Five minutes' walk from the Lamb & Flag, on Charing Cross Road. Browse the poetry and literary biography sections, or just soak up the smell of old paper.

Insider tip: The top floor has a quieter reading room and a small cafe. Staff are genuinely knowledgeable.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

5



4:15 PM · 1.5 hours

National Portrait Gallery

Free (donations suggested \$6-12) · Open 10 AM-6 PM (Thu until 9 PM)

Free museum of portraits from Tudor kings to contemporary artists. Walk south from Foyles (8 minutes) to Trafalgar Square. Focus on the top floors for quieter rooms and clever comparisons of faces across centuries.

Insider tip: The rooftop has a view of the Houses of Parliament at golden hour. Head up around 7:45 PM.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

6



6:00 PM · 1.5 hours

Book ahead

Balthazar

\$32-51 per person for dinner

Buzzy French bistro in Covent Garden with steak frites and oysters. Book ahead or arrive by 5:45 PM to snag a table without a reservation. Five minutes from the National Portrait Gallery.

Insider tip: The bar counter moves fastest if you can't get a table. Go for the moules frites.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

7



7:45 PM · 45 minutes

Seven Dials to Neal Street Evening Walk

Free

Wander the Georgian townhouses and independent shops of Covent Garden's backstreets as the light turns gold. No agenda, just narrow lanes, bookshops and pubs. Five minutes from Balthazar.

Insider tip: The light peaks around 8 PM. Aim for Monmouth Street for the best window displays.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

[Open Day 3 as a route in Google Maps](#)

DAY 3: BRITISH MUSEUM, BRITISH LIBRARY AND COVENT GARDEN PUB (CONTINUED)

Where to eat

Lantana Cafe

Australian · Breakfast · \$

Busy corner spot near British Museum. Order smashed avocado on sourdough, excellent coffee.

[Google Maps >](#)

Dishoom

Indian · Lunch · \$\$

Covent Garden location, buzzy lunch crowd. Get the lamb chops and black daal. Book ahead.

[Google Maps >](#)

Barrafina

Spanish Tapas · Dinner · \$\$

Counter seating in Covent Garden. Order jamón ibérico, patatas bravas, gambas. No bookings, arrive by 5:30pm.

[Google Maps >](#)

Shakespeare's Globe, Tower Bridge and Shad Thames

Sunrise 5:10 AM

Golden hour 7:56 PM

Sunset 8:45 PM

Sleep in South Bank · night 4 of 4

Tour the Globe and Southwark Cathedral, then follow the river east to Tower Bridge and wander the old warehouse lanes of Shad Thames.

PREFER A GUIDE? · 2 HOURS

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre tour

Walk the original (rebuilt) stage, see how Tudor playhouses worked, and understand why his plays still matter.

[Book this tour](#)

1



9:30 AM · 1.5 hours

[Book ahead](#)

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

\$22-32 per person entry · Open 9 AM-5 PM (varies by season; check website)

A working replica of Shakespeare's 1599 playhouse with guided tours of the stage, galleries, and tiring house. You'll see how the plays were staged in his era. It's a 12-minute walk from Southwark station.

Insider tip: Book a tour rather than a matinee if you're not catching a show; they're cheaper and less crowded before 11 AM.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

2



2:45 PM · 45 minutes

Southwark Cathedral

Free (donations suggested \$3.75-6) · Open 8 AM-6 PM (varies; check ahead)

Medieval cathedral (13th-century choir and transepts) with connections to Shakespeare and Dickens, free to enter. The interior is calm and historic, with a modern nave extension. It's a 3-minute walk east from Borough Market.

Insider tip: Stand in the retrochoir to see the oldest stone work; it's where the Shakespeare memorial is displayed.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

3



7:00 PM · 1 hour

Tower Bridge

\$13 per person for exhibition inside; bridge crossing free · Open 9:30 AM-6 PM (Apr-Sep until 9 PM)

Victorian suspension bridge with Gothic towers. Walk across for free or pay to go inside the engine room and high-level walkway for Thames views. It's a 5-minute walk east from Southwark Cathedral. Hit it around golden hour for photography.

Insider tip: Skip the paid walkways; free crossing just before sunset gives you the best light and the most dramatic silhouette.

[Book tickets](#)
[Open in Google Maps >](#)

4



8:15 PM · 1.5 hours

Book ahead

Shad Thames

\$19-38 per person for dinner or drinks

Cobbled riverside alley lined with converted warehouse restaurants and bars, steps from Tower Bridge. Pick a spot for dinner with views onto the Thames. It's a 1-minute walk from Tower Bridge, south side.

Insider tip: The Ivy Market Grill or Pont de la Tour both serve modern British with Thames views; book ahead or arrive by 8:15 PM to beat the queue.

[Open in Google Maps >](#)

Open Day 4 as a route in Google Maps

Where to eat

Scoop

Italian Gelato · Breakfast · \$

Tiny counter near Borough Market. Pistachio or nocciola gelato in a cone, coffee optional.

[Google Maps >](#)

Elliot Cafe

Modern British · Lunch · \$\$

Globe Theatre area, riverside views. Order the roast chicken with seasonal veg and heritage potatoes.

[Google Maps >](#)

The Laughing Gravy

British Gastropub · Dinner · \$\$

Southwark Street, no-fuss vibe. Beef and ale pie, then linger for the pre-theatre crowd energy.

[Google Maps >](#)

BEFORE YOU GO: LONDON

How do I get the best deal on a West End show?

Book direct with the theatre's box office or the official TKTS booth in Leicester Square (opens 10am, cash or card). Matinees are 20-30% cheaper than evening performances. Tuesday and Thursday are often discounted nights.

Which free museums are worth my time in May?

British Museum (vast, go for a few signature rooms, not everything), National Gallery (superb paintings, manageable in 2-3 hours), and V&A (design and objects, easily half a day). All three are free with no time limit once inside.

What's the deal with Borough Market and food?

It's a real working market, not a tourist trap. Skip weekends unless you like chaos. Go Tuesday-Friday morning for quality food stalls, produce, and sandwiches without queues. Spend £15-25 on breakfast or lunch, eat standing up or grab a stool.

Do I need to book museums ahead?

Free museums never sell out, but timed entry slots fill on busy days in May. Book online (free) before you go to guarantee entry at your chosen time and skip the queue.

What's the weather like in London in May?

Expect 13-18°C (55-64°F) with occasional rain. Pack layers, a light jacket, and comfortable walking shoes; an umbrella won't hurt.

What language do people speak in London?

Spoken here: English. No issues at all.

Is London safe for visitors?

London is very safe for tourists. The only real watch-out is pickpocketing on crowded tubes during rush hour and at major attractions, so keep bags zipped and phones secure.

What's the emergency number in United Kingdom?

Call 999 or 112 for police, ambulance, fire or coastguard. If you can't speak, you can text 999 after registering: text "register" to 999 before you need it.

Do you tip in United Kingdom?

Not expected but appreciated. Round up at cafes or leave 10-15% at restaurants if service was good. Pubs are tip-free unless you're ordering at the bar.

What do only locals know about London?

- Hit Borough Market on a Thursday or Friday morning before 11am when it's less chaotic and vendors are freshly stocked.
- Book West End shows at the box office in person rather than online; you'll save on booking fees and sometimes catch last-minute deals.
- The big museums like the British Museum, V&A, and National Gallery are free and stay open late on Thursdays, so you can revisit without feeling rushed.
- Use Oyster cards or contactless payment for the Tube; daily cap costs less than buying individual tickets and gets you all-zones access.