

EVENTS IN LONDON

January

The New Year's Day Parade 1 January, from Whitehall to Piccadilly.

London International Boat Show – early January at the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre.

Chinese New Year celebrations around Gerrard Street and Leicester Square, date depends on the lunar/solar calendar.



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February

The Olympia Fine Art and Antique Fair held in February or March at Olympia.

The Great Spitalfields Pancake Race held on Shrove Tuesday at Old Spitalfields Market, Brushfield Street, E1.

March

Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race on a Saturday in late March, from Putney Bridge to Mortlake.

London Book Fair at Olympia.

April

London Marathon Sunday in late April, starts from Greenwich to the Mall.

Easter Monday Parade in Battersea Park.

May

Baishaki Mela early May Bengali New Year Festival around Brick Lane, E1.

Chelsea Flower Show late May, at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.



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Above: The London International Boat Show is held every year at Earl's Court.

Left: A lion dancer in London's Chinatown celebrates the Chinese New Year.

Notting Hill Carnival is a three-day event with floats, live music and large numbers of people.



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The Queen on her way to the annual ceremony of the State Opening of Parliament. Most of the UK's great state occasions take place in London.

June

Derby Day horse racing at Epsom in early June.

Trooping the Colour mid-June at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall to mark the Queen's official birthday.

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of contemporary art from early-June to mid-August at Burlington House, Piccadilly.

Kenwood Lakeside Concerts at Kenwood House, Hampstead Heath, from mid-June to September.

Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championship last week of June and first week of July.

July

London Pride March and Parade and **Mardi Gras Gay and Lesbian Festival** around the beginning of July each year.

City of London Festival, mid-July, an arts festival in venues around the City including concerts in St Paul's Cathedral.

The Proms Henry Wood's classical music Promenade Concerts mid-July to mid-September at the Royal Albert Hall.

August

Buckingham Palace State Rooms open to the public in August and September.

Notting Hill Carnival August Bank Holiday weekend.

September

Horse of the Year Show, Wembley Arena.

London Open House weekend at the end of September opens up over 500 buildings.

October

Trafalgar Square Festival held in early October.

November

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run in early November, starts from Hyde Park Corner.

Bonfire Night large firework displays around 5 November.

Remembrance Day Service and Parade, on the Sunday nearest 11 November, centres on the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

State Opening of Parliament usually in November.

Lord Mayor's Procession and Show mid November.

December

The London Film Festival, based around the National Film Theatre and cinemas across London, from mid-November to early Dec.

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All British government departments can be accessed through the Government Centre for Information Systems' World Wide Web pages. The address is: www.ukonline.gov.uk Information about the UK can be found on www.i-uk.com

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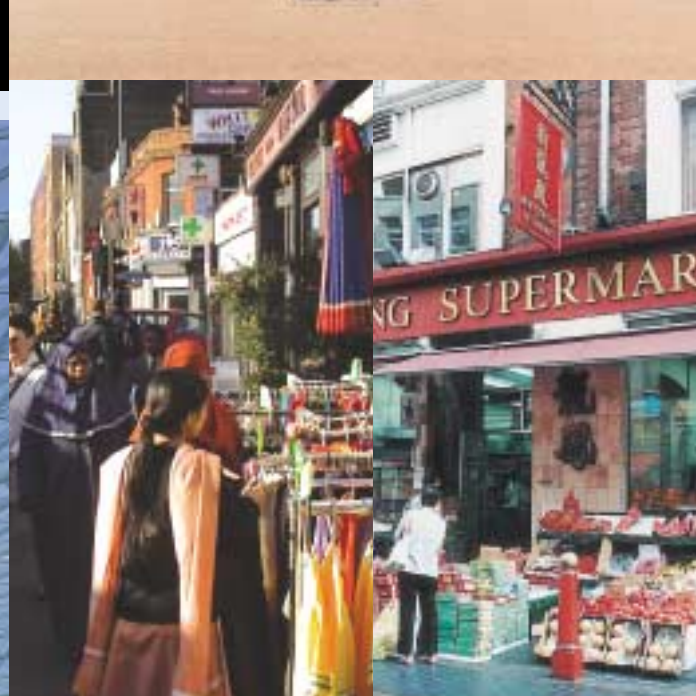
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Front cover: The Great Court of the British Museum (Courtesy of Foster & Partners/Nigel Young). Back cover: The Houses of Parliament through the London Eye (© London Picture Service).



Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace takes place at 11.30 every morning in the forecourt.



Around one-third of London's population belongs to minority ethnic groups. As a result there is an immense range of cultural life in London, reflected on the high streets in the clothes people wear, the cafes and restaurants, and the variety of goods, especially foodstuffs, in the shops.



St James's Park, situated between Buckingham Palace and Whitehall, is a peaceful place to sit in the centre of London. It is home to more than 30 species of birds.



Not far from central London Petersham Meadows seen from the hill which gently rises from Richmond village.

LONDON IS A COLLECTION OF VILLAGES joined over time. It is a mixture of old and new, of built-up areas and parkland.

Some of the oldest buildings are in the City; parts of the Tower of London date from the eleventh century. In medieval times tradespeople grouped together, giving rise to street names like Poultry and Milk Street that remain to this day.

Buckingham Palace, the official London residence of the monarchy since 1837, was built between 1702-05. Dignified terraced houses were built in squares in central London for the gentry of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century houses were built further out in Muswell Hill, Ealing and Sydenham.

Massive house building extended London's spreading suburbs in the 1920s and 1930s. High-rise development took place on a large-scale after the Second World War, replacing bombed housing or slums. By the late 1940s a green belt around London restricted further building.

GREEN AREAS cover about a third of London. The most famous are the royal parks: Greenwich, Richmond, Bushey and, in the centre of London, Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Kensington Gardens and St James's Park.

Other parks and gardens include Brent Lodge Park, with its river walks and lock flight, and Hampstead Heath, with views across London. Victoria Park in the East End, designed in 1842, is thought to be the first municipal recreation park in the UK.

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew has plants from all over the world. Other smaller, botanic gardens are at Avery Hill, the ancient Physic Garden at Chelsea, Syon House Gardens in Brentford and the Japanese garden at St Katherine's Dock.

At Rainham and Erith on the outskirts of London, and Hackney and Walthamstow closer to the centre, there are extensive estuarine marshes that provide staging posts for migratory birds. Many outer London boroughs have large areas of woodland.



© E.CO
Commuters crossing the River Thames. Greater London has a labour pool of more than 3.5 million people, and a further 4 million live within commuting distance.



© London Picture Service
The Houses of Parliament are based on the north bank of the Thames at Westminster. The clock tower houses the famous Big Ben bell.



© London Picture Service
Just off Whitehall is Downing Street, where the Prime Minister and Chancellor have their official residences at numbers 10 and 11 respectively.



© London Picture Service
Along the river opposite the Tower of London is City Hall, the newly built home of the Greater London Authority, which includes the London Assembly and the elected Mayor of London. It was designed by the architect Norman Foster & Partners and was opened by HM the Queen on 23 July, 2002.

LONDON, CAPITAL OF THE UK is situated in south east England on the banks of the River Thames.

Spread over 1,580 sq km, London is home to seven million people. Another million travel in to work and over 28 million tourists visit each year.

As a great trading city, London has long attracted people from across the world to live and work. Over one million of London's residents were born outside the UK and around 33 per cent belong to minority ethnic groups.

PARLIAMENT HAS MET at Westminster since the thirteenth century to debate the nation's affairs, pass legislation and vote money supply to the Government. It has two chambers: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Of the 651 Members of Parliament elected to the House of Commons, 74 represent London constituencies.

Whitehall is the traditional heart of the state and is used to describe both the Government and the Civil Service. Several government departments have their headquarters in either Whitehall or the streets nearby.

An elected Mayor and Assembly have responsibilities for London's transport, strategic planning, economic development, environmental strategy, fire services, policing, health improvements and culture.

Not be confused with the Mayor is the Lord Mayor, head of the Corporation of London (the local authority for the old City of London). The work of the Lord Mayor complements that of the elected Mayor and includes representing the people who live and work in the 'City' as well as promoting the City and its financial services at home and abroad.

In addition to the Corporation of London, there are 32 London boroughs working at a local level to provide a range of services including social services, education, libraries, trading standards, parking controls, allotments, after-school clubs and sports facilities across London.

The diplomatic community numbers about 18,000 and there are over 150 diplomatic missions in London. In addition several thousand people are accredited to the 29 international organisations that have their headquarters here.



© London Picture Service
The Bank of England, known affectionately as 'the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street', is in the heart of the City. It regulates and supervises the banking system, manages the national debt, and its Monetary Policy Committee sets the national interest rates. The tall building in the background is the London Stock Exchange.



© London Picture Service
Oxford Street in the West End is London's main shopping thoroughfare, but is just part of the varied and extensive retail sector, with nearly 30,000 shops ranging from major department stores to small specialist shops.



© London Picture Service
Diners spend £1.6 billion a year eating out in London, at the 3,500 public houses 'pubs' and wine bars and 6,000 restaurants. With the relaxation of the licensing laws, pubs and wine bars can stay open all day.



© London Picture Service
One Canada Square at Canary Wharf, Docklands, is the tallest building in the UK at 244 metres.

LONDON'S ECONOMY accounts for around 17 per cent of UK GDP and has the highest rate of new business formation in the UK.

Some 2,300 US companies and 54 per cent of Europe's 500 largest companies have offices in London.

London is a world financial centre, alongside New York and Tokyo. Financial services are mainly concentrated in the City of London, known also as 'the Square Mile' because of its size, and employ some 268,000 people.

The London Commodity Exchange is Europe's main market for trading futures and options contracts in products like cocoa, coffee, sugar, wheat and barley. Other commodities are dealt at the Baltic Exchange, the International Petroleum Exchange, the London Metal Exchange and the London Bullion Market, where gold prices fixed twice daily provide a point of reference for gold dealings worldwide.

Manufacturing output in London is valued at over £11 billion. There are some 20,000 manufacturing companies employing 300,000 people. Over 14,000 scientists and technologists are employed in research and development in London, either in industry or in universities.

Tourism is London's second largest industry and generated over £8 billion in 2000. Business tourism is significant, with 31 per cent of tourism expenditure linked to business and conferences.

Around £7 billion has been invested in regenerating the East End Docklands in London's largest commercial property development. This area, based around Canary Wharf, is fast becoming London's skyscraper district.

Another major regeneration project is taking place in the West End at Paddington Waterside; a mix of office developments and residential areas in central London near the main shopping area of Oxford Street. The Heathrow express provides a 15-minute link with Heathrow Airport.

Five international airports serve London: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and London City together handle over 108 million passengers a year.



© London Picture Service
Piccadilly Circus underground station. The underground system is also known as the 'Tube'. It is only entirely underground in central London; in the suburbs most lines are above ground.



© E.CO
Trains arriving from France and Belgium through the Channel Tunnel come into Waterloo International Terminal, designed by Nicholas Grimshaw and Partners. Train passengers to mainland Europe arrive or depart at Victoria or Charing Cross stations for the Channel ferry ports.



© E.CO
Runners in the London Marathon at Tower Bridge. Over 30,000 runners from international athletes to amateurs take part each year.



© E.CO
The dome of St Paul's Cathedral is a familiar London landmark. There has been a cathedral here since 604. The present cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, was completed in 1710.

© E.CO
There are 250 public sports halls in London, 144 swimming pools, five ice rinks, six dry ski slopes, over 100 snooker clubs and many other facilities including bowling greens, climbing walls and ten-pin bowling centres.

With buses the underground is the principal means of public transport around and into the centre of London, especially north of the Thames.

The Docklands Light Railway, a fully-automated computer-controlled railway covering 27 km with its extension to Lewisham, carries over 110,000 passengers a day.

A NUMBER OF SPORTING EVENTS are held in London: lawn tennis at Wimbledon; cricket at Lord's in St John's Wood; and international rugby union at Twickenham.

Football is the main spectator sport. London has 13 league clubs and Premier Division teams such as Chelsea and Arsenal regularly attract over 30,000 fans. In summer Middlesex play county cricket at Lord's and Surrey at the Oval.

West London is home to the Harlequins and the Wasps rugby union clubs, a rugby league side and an American football team, while Hounslow has one of the most successful hockey clubs. The Cobra racetrack is the longest indoor go-kart racetrack in Europe and there is speedway at White City.

Crystal Palace is the site of the national athletics stadium, and Haringey has one of the UK's leading athletics clubs. The London Arena in Docklands, the Royal Albert Hall and Olympia are the main venues for indoor sports. The London Arena is home to the London Knights ice hockey team. Olympia hosts the annual Horse of the Year Show, which includes international show jumping.

The River Thames and lakes and reservoirs at places like Ashford or the Royal Docks provide facilities for yachting, angling, rowing, canoeing, waterskiing and wind-surfing. The annual Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge Universities is held on the Thames between Mortlake and Putney.

There is a range of sports facilities provided either publicly or through one of London's 20,000 sports clubs. Outdoors there are playing fields and public tennis courts. And London has over 160 golf courses.



© London Picture Service
The last night of the Proms music festival is traditionally given over to the promenaders who sing patriotic songs and wave union jacks.



© London Picture Service
The exhibition galleries at the new British Library at St Pancras are open to everyone. The Reading Room is restricted to people who can show that access is necessary for research.



© London Picture Service
The Tate Modern at Southwark, London's newest gallery opened in May 2000, attracted 5.2 million visitors in its first year with its exhibitions of 20th century art, dramatic views across the river and huge galleries in a building converted from the old Bankside Power Station. The Millennium Bridge, known as the Blade of Light connects it to the north bank.



© London Picture Service
The courtyard of Somerset House is a venue for concerts during the summer and is transformed into an ice rink over Christmas.



© London Picture Service
Queen's House, Greenwich, part of the National Maritime Museum, commissioned by Queen Anne in 1616. It houses a fine art collection and is also available for hire for corporate and private entertainment.

LONDON'S CULTURAL LIFE is diverse and entertaining ...

On any night up to 100 bands play every type of music. All the main record companies have their European headquarters in London. It is estimated that British music export earnings exceed £1.1 billion.

Concert halls and parks are venues for both modern and classical music festivals. The Proms, for example, is a mainly classical music festival held every summer in the Royal Albert Hall. Classical music groups include the London Philharmonia and London Philharmonic orchestras.

There are 204 theatres in London and over 1,000 drama companies. Productions range from classic plays to challenging new drama, from drawing room farce to grand opera.

The English National Opera always performs in English and is based at the Coliseum on St Martin's Lane. The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden is the home of the Royal Opera company and the Royal Ballet. Sadler's Wells theatre in Islington has been recently rebuilt and puts on a wide variety of dance and music programmes from around the world.

The main permanent art collections are at the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate, Tate Modern, Somerset House and the Wallace Collection in Hertford House. New and experimental paintings, sculpture and photography can be found at venues such as the Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Photographers' Gallery.

West Kensington has the Natural History, Victoria & Albert and the Science Museums. The National Maritime Museum is in Greenwich, the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth and the British Museum in Bloomsbury. London also has many specialist museums of, for instance, toys in Bethnal Green. And there is the Museum of London at the Barbican Arts Centre, and so much more ... something for everyone.