

# The London Toolkit

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## The Independent Travellers Guide To London

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### London Icons Self Guided Walk

#### Stage 2 Horseguards To London Eye / Westminster

This is the second part of our circular walk that covers many of London's main sights including Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace and the London Eye to name just a few. [Stage 1 of the walk \(whitehall\\_walk\\_westminster.htm\)](#) begins at Westminster Underground Station.

If you just walked this without stopping you'd do it in under an hour, but as there is so much to see you probably will have done well to complete it in one day.

These notes have focus on the logistics, no attempt is made to be a substitute for a good guide book on London.

Invest in a good London street map, (the London A-Z series has a great range of suitable street maps) readily available in all news stands and shops and you'll have no problem following this walk and be fully equipped to make interesting diversions and adaptations with confidence.

#### Self Guided London Walks

[Overview \(london\\_walks.htm\)](#)

[London Icons \(whitehall\\_walk\\_westminster.htm\)](#)

[City of London \(pool\\_london\\_walk\\_tower\\_london.htm\)](#)

[Kensington \(kensington\\_walk\\_north.htm\)](#)

[Shopping Walk \(shopping\\_walk\\_charing\\_cross\\_road.htm\)](#)

#### Continuing Our Walk From Stage 1 At Horseguards

We left the walk in Stage 1 at Horseguards, this a circular walk, so it doesn't matter really where you start.

We continue our walk by going through the arch away from Whitehall to the parade ground on the other side of Horseguards. Keep going straight across the parade ground, cross the road into St James's Park.

#### St James's Park

This was London's first royal park created by Henry VIII in 1532 and for many, the nicest of the royal parks.

The centrepiece is the lake that attracts many birds.

We suggest you follow the lakeside walk along its southern perimeter.

There is a restaurant at this eastern end by the lakeside. At the western end cross the bridge over the lake and up to Buckingham Palace.

#### Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace has been the London home of the monarchy since 1762. We have a dedicated [Buckingham Palace \(../whattodo/buckinghampalace.htm\)](#) page that also covers the logistics of the Changing of the Guard here.

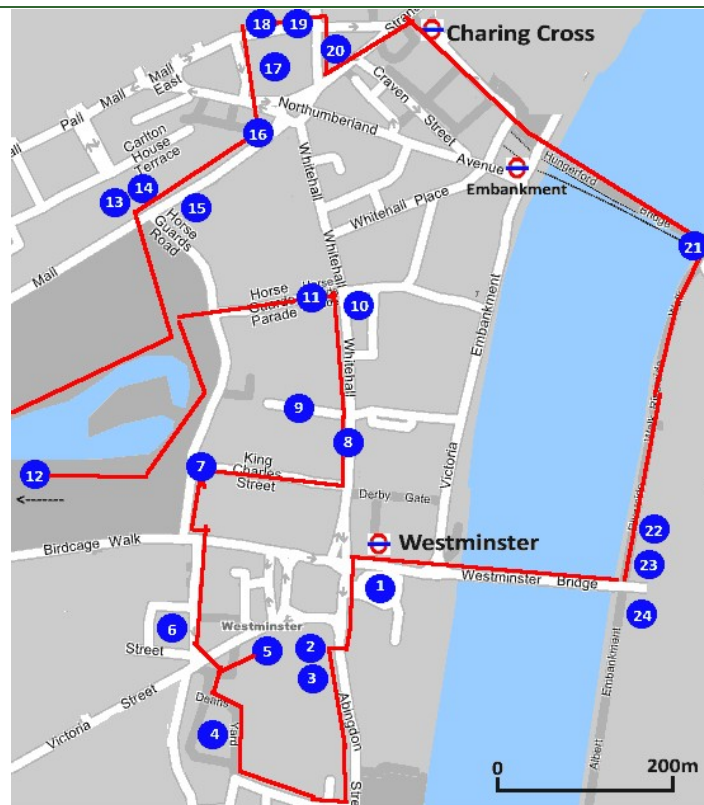
After Buckingham Palace complete your lap of the lake, this time by following the northern perimeter. A little over half way along the lake take the path veering left, north-eastwards towards Trafalgar Square.

#### The Mall

The broad road on the northern perimeter is the Mall. We are heading for the north east corner of St James's park at the junction of the Mall and Horse Guards Road that is the eastern perimeter road.

At this point on the far side of the Mall is a tall 38m granite column called the Duke of York Column. When the Duke of York died in 1827, the entire British Army had to forego one day's wages in order to pay for a monument to the Duke. The column was started in 1833 and finished one year later.

Just to the right of the column is the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Exhibits have often caused public outrage in the past.



- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 - Big Ben/Parliament   | 13 - Duke Yorks Column        |
| 2 - St Margaret's Church | 14 - ICA                      |
| 3 - Jewel Tower          | 15 - The Citadel              |
| 4 - Deans Yard           | 16 - Admiralty Arch           |
| 5 - Westminster Abbey    | 17 - Trafalgar Square         |
| 6 - Central Hall         | 18 - National Gallery         |
| 7 - Cabinet War Rooms    | 19 - Portrait Gallery         |
| 8 - Cenotaph             | 20 - St Martins Church        |
| 9 - Downing Street       | 21 - Festival Hal             |
| 10 - Banqueting House    | 22 - London Eye               |
| 11 - Horseguards         | 23 - County Hall              |
| 12 - Buckingham Palace   | 24 - Florence Nightingale Mus |

([london\\_walks.htm](#))

[Stage 1 Westminster To Horseguards Via Westminster Abbey \(whitehall\\_walk\\_westminster.htm\)](#)

[Stage 2 Horseguards To Big Ben Via Buckingham Palace \(whitehall\\_walk\\_whitehall.htm\)](#)

Unlike the National Gallery just round the corner, there is an admission fee.

Opposite the ICA is the Citadell This bunker like windowless building with vegetation covering its walls is part of the Admiralty and was built in the 2nd World War to withstand a 1,000lb bomb. Underneath the ground you are standing on is a web of underground tunnels connecting government departments, Buckingham Palace and Downing Street.

It is thought there is a branch of the Victoria Line Underground between Green Park and Victoria stations that goes to Buckingham Palace and the Mall could be used as a landing strip if the worst happened.

We follow the Mall to its end, exiting onto Trafalgar Square through Admiralty Arch built as a memorial to Queen Victoria. The building now houses apartments for the government.

### Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square today is pretty much a traffic island. In the last few years two sides of Trafalgar Square have been pedestrianised. We suggest that for this walk you first cross into the centre of the square where Nelson's Column is located.

The name commemorates the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), a British naval victory of the Napoleonic Wars. The centrepiece, Nelson's Column is topped by a statue of Horatio Nelson, the admiral who commanded the British Fleet at the battle of Trafalgar. The square has become a social and political location for visitors and Londoners alike. There are often events put on here, political rallies rally here and its one of the main points to see in the new year too.

Trafalgar Square is also technically the centre of London. If you are travelling around England and see a road sign saying London x miles, it is to Trafalgar Square that this distance is measured to.

Dominating the northern side of Trafalgar Square is the National Gallery. The National Gallery, London, houses one of the greatest collections of European painting in the world. The National Gallery houses more than 2000 European paintings from the 13th century to 1900.

Like most of the major art galleries entry is free.

Next door to the National Gallery is the National Portrait Gallery. The Gallery was founded in 1856 to collect portraits of famous British men and women. Explore 120,000 portraits from the 16th Century to the present day. Like the National Gallery, entrance is free.

On the eastern side of Trafalgar Square is St Martin in the Fields Church. Because of its prominent position, St Martin-in-the-Fields is one of the most famous non-cathedral churches in London. The church is known for its regular lunchtime and evening concerts and has a popular cafe in its crypt.

Leave Trafalgar Square along Duncannon Street which runs along the south side of St Martins. At the end of Duncannon Street you will see Charing Cross Station directly opposite, the most central of London's railway stations.

Cross over the road and walk down the left hand side of the station, a narrow lane with shops. This will bring you to Embankment Station, follow the signs up to the Golden Jubilee Bridge that you can see above you crossing the River Thames either side of the railway bridge. Cross over the footbridge, you have great views of the River Thames both ways.

### Royal Festival Hall

On the south side of the footbridge, to the east is the Royal Festival Hall. The Royal Festival Hall is the only remaining fixture from the 1951 Festival of Britain.

The hall hosts a wide range of the performing arts from classical and modern music to dance and the visual arts.

### The London Eye

You will have seen the London Eye by the river as soon as you crossed the Golden Jubilee Bridge.

Built for the year 2000 celebrations the London Eye has become one of the most popular attractions for visitors. The wheel and its capsules take 45 minutes to make a rotation giving great views over the city.

We have a dedicated [London Eye \(../whattodo/londoneye.htm\)](http://www.londonwalk.com/walks/whitehall_walk_whitehall.htm) page.

The pedestrianised area along the river here is popular with street entertainers. The Jubilee Gardens are a welcome spot of green on a hot day to lay out and have an ice cream.

### County Hall

The grand building besides the London Eye, in the background of the picture above is County Hall. County Hall used to be home to the Greater London Council, local government for London until it was abolished in 1986.

Today it houses two hotels, the Marriott and Premier Travel Inn County Hall, two of the best located hotels in London. Also in the building along the riverfront is an aquarium and a museum devoted to the surrealist painter, Salvador Dali.

County Hall is by Westminster Bridge, where on the opposite side we started the walk. Either climb the stairs up to the bridge and across to the start at Big Ben or walk through the short tunnel under the bridge to the opposite side for good views of Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament.



Trafalgar Square



Cafe In The Crypt  
St Martin In The Fields

[Link To Stage 1 Big Ben To Horseguards Via Westminster Abbey \(whitehall walk westminster.htm\)](#)

### Original London Tour Hop On Hop Off Sightseeing Buses

For the vast majority of visitors to London, the way you get about town on a day to day basis is by the London Underground, perhaps supplemented by the occasional red London bus using an [Oyster](#) ([../briefing/oystercard.htm](#)) or [Travelcard](#) ([../briefing/travelcard.htm](#)).

But,



[\(../whattodo/original\\_london\\_sightseeing.htm\)](#)

especially for the first time visitor to London, the popular hop on, hop off sightseeing buses are a great orientation to the city of London getting you up to speed on the layout and spotting new places of interest you were not aware of.

You will have invested a lot of time and money in getting to London so you will want to use your time as efficiently as possible. The hop on, hop off sightseeing buses are perhaps unrivalled in their ability to give you a speedy informed orientation to the layout of London. They also help you identify new locations that appeal to you, perhaps pointed out by the on-board guide and also give the once over those attractions you had always planned on visiting.

These buses offer comprehensive coverage covering nearly all the main sights in London. The popularity of the buses means there is one along every few minutes and you get a grandstand view perched up on the top deck of the bus. In addition to the bus tour a river cruise and some free walking tours are all part of the deal.

### Key Points of Original London Tour

- Tickets valid for 24 hours
- Three major bus tour routes supplemented by feeder services
- FREE Walking Tours! (Three of them)
- FREE Thames River Cruise
- Hop-on and hop-off service with stops at all the attractions
- English live guides + Audio guides (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, German, Japanese & Kids' Channel.)

## Original London Tour Open Top Sightseeing Bus

Hop On & Hop Off At All Of London's Major Sightseeing Attractions



**24 Hours**

Adults - £26.00

Children (5-15) - £12.50

**48 Hours**

Adults - £36.00

Children (5-15) - £16.50

Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 Children) Available

**Hop on, hop off service**

- 3 major tour routes
- Free river cruise
- 3 walking tours

[more](#) **INFO** [BOOK](#)

[\(../affs/london\\_original\\_tour.htm\)](#)

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