



Sluggo's Guide to London

**When it's three o'clock in New York,
it's still 1938 in London. — *Bette Midler***

Here are some tips on how to enjoy your lovely stay in London

Survival Tips

Arriving at Heathrow

The Heathrow Express is the quickest way into central London. If you are flying into Heathrow Terminal 4, when you exit after customs, turn left and you will see the Heathrow Express train. (For Terminals 1-3, follow signs for the Heathrow Express.) Buy tickets (£13 one way) from the ticket machine. It's a fast 20 minute ride into Paddington Station, with connections to the Bakerloo, Central, District, and Hammersmith & City lines. You can take the Piccadilly line tube, but it's more than twice as long (but also much less expensive if you have the time.) thetube.com, heathrowexpress.com

Where Am I?

Post Codes in London will help to tell you where you are in the city. Starting from the Center of London (Trafalgar Square), they tell you the direction, and how far out you are. WC1 is west of center, 1 "click." SE17 would be southeast of center, and 17 clicks.

Money Matters

Avoid the Bureau du Change like the plague. The exchange rates are better if you a) buy on your credit card and b) get cash at ATMs, which will all accept your American bank card. Limit your visits to ATMs, because the fee is usually \$5 per transaction (but you make that up in the better exchange rate.) Prices quoted here are in GBP, you can multiply by 1.6 to get an approximate US\$ equivalent (the exchange rate, of course, varies.)

I'm Floored

Buildings street level floors are called "Ground", the 2nd floor up is the "first" floor and so on.

Zebra Crossing Ahead

In London (and most of the UK), some crosswalks are marked with heavy white lines, and black and white striped poles, topped by flashing yellow globes. These are called zebra (ZEB-rah) crossings, after the stripes. Cars *must* stop for pedestrians when you enter these crossings. Normal unmarked crossings, wait for the walk sign and remember to look LEFT first!

Cheap Tickets

There is a half-price tickets booth in Leicester Square, most theatres also sell rush tickets a half hour before the show

London Calling

When you are trying to call within London, drop the first 0 in the phone #, except always dial the full #, including the 0, for any UK mobile phones. (If you are interested in having a cell phone in the UK, you can buy phones you can “top up” for about £59 (\$75) at the major mobile phone stores – Orange, T-Mobile, Vodafone, etc)

A Tip

Brit's are notoriously bad tippers, so go easy on the tips:

- **Restaurants:** 10% is a good tip (like 17% in the US)
- **Cabs:** tipping is not expected, but round up to the next pound
- **Bars/Clubs:** Tipping is NOT done. If you are spending a lot of time with one bartender, he (or she) is friendly and helpful and you like them, you can buy them a drink by saying “and one for you” when you order. They'll add a drink for themselves (to drink after closing) to your tab
- **Hotel:** Tip your maid £1 a day or so.

Transport in London

The London subway is called the Tube or Underground, and is supplemented with an integrated system of buses and mainline (commuter and inter-city) trains. Basic fares on the Tube are: **Single Journey: £2 in zone one, or £2.20 within any two zones (and higher for more zones.)**

Daily Travelcards:

If in London less than 4 days, just buy daily travelcard. Peak daily travelcards are good anytime *weekdays* until 4:30A the morning *after* purchase. Off Peak travelcards are good anytime after 9:30AM to 4:30AM the next morning after purchase, and all day Sat, Sun and Holidays. **Single Day Travelcard £5.30 (peak) / £4.30 (off-peak)**

Weekend Travelcards

There are also weekend travelcards, good all Saturday and Sunday. **Weekend Travelcard (Zone 1&2): £6.40**

7-Day Travelcards:

If you are in London more than 4 days, buy a Zone 1 & 2 tube travel card and it will more than pay for itself. You can get this at Heathrow or all major stations. It will require a passport type photo (for the photo id part) from machines, which are at most stations selling passes. You can also buy in advance of your trip online at **ticket-on-line.com**. You can also use the travelcard on any Zone 1 & 2 bus and also Nightbuses.

7-day TravelCards: £20.20 paper at station / £19.80 online (plus passport picture charge)

Oyster Cards

Transport for London is also phasing in stored-value proximity card called an Oyster Card you pass by a reader. Currently only *7-day* travelcards (and longer) are available for £19.60 online at **oystercard.com** or at major stations. They are refillable at most stations. Using an Oyster as a pre-pay card gives you a slight discount on each trip as well.

Ticket Extensions

If you are traveling outside a zone for which you have a valid ticket (for instance traveling to Zone 3 and you have a Zone 1&2 travelcard), you must buy an extension ticket from any collector, or fare machine. Put the *extension* ticket through the exit barriers at your final destination.

London Buses

London has an excellent and very well signed bus system. You can use your weekly or daily travelcard on buses (as long as you stay within the corresponding zones). Maps at every bus stop will tell you what buses serve that stop, where they go, how frequent and even where to catch other buses nearby.

Then boarding the bus in the front, show your pass to the driver.

[Single journey including Zone 1: £1, Single journey in rest of London £ .70]

Using the Tube

Journey Planner maps are in every Tube station. Use them to determine what line you want, and follow the signs to the proper line. Slide your ticket or travelcard into the barrier and it will open. Keep your ticket/travelcard handy as you will need it to exit at the end of your journey, when you will again pass it through the exit barrier. (New proximity cards are also available for weekly or longer travelcards. These are passed near the yellow circles on top of the barrier.)

One at the platform level, check the line maps for what platform you want and follow the signs. Electronic signboards on each platform will tell you the termination point of the next train, and when it is due to arrive. Make sure you know what branch you want and that you are getting on the proper train!

Tube Stations

All listings below note the nearest Tube (Subway) station. There may be other subway stations near the sites, and London is well-served by an excellent bus system. Consult the websites of the individual attractions for more transit information, or thetube.com.

Taxis and Mini-Cabs



Black taxis in London are reliable, relatively cheap and roomy. Cab drivers are required to pass “The Knowledge” of London streets and are required by law to take you the most direct route. Extra fare will be added for each additional passenger, this is normal. Round up to the nearest pound as your tip.

Mini-cabs are unlicensed, or gypsy cabs, operating in unmarked cars that will be around many clubs at closing times (or can be ordered from mini-cab offices.) Mini-cab drivers are not as scrupulous as Black taxi drivers, so be sure and negotiate your fare *up front*, (minicabs aren't) and until you metered know London well, stick to Black cabs.

Where to Stay

This is an incredibly subjective (and short!) list of hotels in London, all tried out by Sluggo. Keep your expectations small, as London (as with most European) hotel rooms are small, by American standards. Many, but not all, include English breakfast or continental breakfast in the room rate. Also, make sure when requesting rooms to clearly state the dates as August 1 (since 8/1 in England means the 8th of January!). All rates are double rooms with ensuite baths (you can get cheaper rooms by sharing a bath.)

Cheap



Citadines (citadines.com/uhot/uwres_ltpms70.htm)  Charing Cross, Embankment
20 Northumberland Street, Trafalgar Sq.  0870 400 3040

This French chain has small studio type apartments with small kitchens and comfortable pull-out sofas. This location is tremendously convenient to all of central London. Room service nightly is extra. [£85 / night]

The Royal Adelphi (www.royaladelphi.co.uk)  Charing Cross, Embankment
21 Villiars Street, off the Strand, WC2N  020 7930 8764

This slightly run down hotel's location can't be beat, and the staff is super-friendly (even a little nosey.) Be sure and ask for a room away from the front, as the noisy gay club Heaven is across the street. *No elevator*. [£90 / night]

Not Cheap

Grange Holborn Hotel (grangehotels.com/holborn/holborn.htm)  Holborn
50-60 Southampton Row, London WC1B  020-7242-1800

Four star hotel with a fab location near Soho, Covent Garden, the City and the British Museum. [£210 / night, but frequent £90 summer rates]

Sightseeing & Attractions

Note on URLs: The URLs listed are the shortest ones that work, so type them as shown!

Take a Bus Tour!

Definitely take a bus tour. They are touristy, but do give you a good overview of London. Buses generally allow you to “hop on /hop off” privileges. (Even former Londoners say the tour buses gave them a new perspective on their hometown.) Most buses start at Piccadilly Circus (🚏 Piccadilly Cir) or Trafalgar Sq. (🚏 Charing Cross.)

The London Eye (www.londoneye.com) 🚏 Waterloo, Exit 6 for Southbank
Southbank, London 📞 0870 400 3040
Spectacular views of London from this engineering marvel, the largest “observation wheel” in the world. This is a **must do!** [Adm: £10.50 – 11]



The British Museum (thebritishmuseum.ac.uk) 🚏 Holborn
Great Russell Street, Holborn, London 📞 0207 323 8299
Home of the Rosetta Stone, the famous Elgin Marbles and other ancient treasures stolen from other countries. Sir Norman Foster’s glass-enclosed courtyard is worth a visit. [Free]



The Imperial War Museum (www.iwm.org.uk) 🚏 Lambeth North, Waterloo
Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ. 📞 0207 416 5320
Excellent museum covering wars of the twentieth century, covering all aspects of life in wartime, including a chilling concentration camp exhibit, and of course lots of tanks, planes and bombs! A note of interest, the building housing the Museum is the former Bedlam insane asylum, from which we get the word “Bedlam.” [Free, except special exhibits]



War Cabinet Rooms (www.iwm.org.uk/cabinet) 🚏 Westminster
Clive Steps, King Charles St, London SW1A 2AQ 📞 0207 766 0120
Fascinating look at Churchill’s WWII fortified basement bunker, with its warren of corridors, rooms and period equipment. *Recently Expanded* [£7]



St Paul’s Cathedral (stpauls.co.uk) 🚏 St Paul’s
St. Paul’s Churchyard, The City, London 📞 0207 236 4128
Christopher Wren’s magnificent church, including crypts, the whispering gallery, and a great view of London if you want to climb to the top of the dome. [£7]



Westminster Abby (westminster-abby.org) 🚏 Westminster
20 Dean’s Yard, Whitehall 📞 0207 222 5152
One of the most famous cathedrals in the world. Site of Coronations, in the shadow of Parliament, it is the final resting place of Kings and Queens, as well as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Handel, etc. [£6]



National Portrait Gallery (www.npg.org.uk)  Leicester Sq or Charing Cross
St. Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE  0207 312 2463
I personally find the National Gallery kind of boring, but LOVE the NPG. [Free, except special exhibits]

Tate Modern (www.tate.org.uk/modern)  Southwark or Blackfriars
Bankside, London SE1 9TG  0207 887 8000
Housed in the former Bankside Power Station (The "Turbine Hall" alone is worth the trip), houses a collection of international modern art from 1900 to the present day, including major works by Dalí, Picasso, Matisse, Rothko and Warhol [Free, except special exhibits]

Saatchi Gallery (saatchi-gallery.co.uk)  Waterloo or Westminster
Southbank, London SE1 7PB  0207 7928 8195
Housed in the former County Hall (also home of London's new Aquarium), contains Ad Man Richard Saatchi's provocative collection of contemporary art, including Tracey Emin, the Champan Brothers, and Damien Hirst's sliced up animals. [£8.50]

Museum of London (www.museum-london.org.uk)  Barbican
London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN  0207 600 3699
The largest city museum in the world, telling the fascinating story of London from prehistoric times to the present day. [Free]

The V&A (www.vam.ac.uk)  South Kensington
Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL  0207 942 2000
The Victoria & Albert museum houses an incredible collection of design and art from the ancient Greeks and Romans, to dresses, shoes, glass, tapestries, ironwork and on and on. One of my favorite exhibits is an office designed by Frank Lloyd Wright transported to London and reassembled in the V&A (Note: It's a LONG walk from the tube via a subway – underground pedestrian tunnel). [Free, except special exhibits]

London's Transport Museum (ltmuseum.co.uk)  Covent Garden
The Pizza, Covent Garden  379 6344
The Transport Museum is one of my favorite places in London, and you might like it even if you are not a train spotter (transport freak). The gift shop alone is worth a visit for the fun Tube merch. [£5.95]

Suggested Excursions

Southbank / City

For a good day of stuff, Do the **London Eye** on the south bank (🚇 Waterloo), then walk down the river to the **Tate Modern**, check out the giant glass testicle that is **London City Hall** (and the giant glass gherkin across the river) then across the **Millennium Bridge** to **St Paul's**. Do climb the dome at St Paul's. (Even if you are scared of heights like I am). If you have time, walk to the **Museum of London** close by.

Greenwich

Another good day or half day trip is take a boat from **Westminster** or **Embankment Pier** (🚇: Westminster or Embankment) to **Greenwich** (greenwichengland.com) and check out the **Royal Observatory**, and the town is quite cute as well with pubs, shops and a market. (You can also go to 🚇 Bank for the **Docklands Light Railway** to 🚇 Cutty Sark.)

Chelsea

Chelsea is one of the poshest neighborhoods in London. Take the tube to 🚇 **Sloane Square** and check out **Peter Jones** dept. store, then wander down King's Road toward the River, where you can see **Albert Bridge**, which is particularly pretty lit up at dusk. Along the way stop in the fabulous **Heal's** and Jasper Conran's **Habitat** stores, which feature great home furnishings.

Shop 'till you Drop

Check out Camden Town market (camdentown.co.uk - 🚇 Camden Town), esp on Saturday when it is mobbed. Portobello Road market is also fun (portobelloroad.co.uk - 🚇 Notting Hill Gate). Note that on Saturdays, the Camden Town tube station is closed to riders *entering* the station due to overcrowding, so you'll have to walk to a nearby station for service.

War, War War!

Two museums I'd definitely recommend are **The Imperial War Museum** in South London, and the **Cabinet War Rooms** just off Whitehall (see listings above) For a day of warfare, visit both!

Eating in London

Lunch:


- Pick a pub that looks doesn't look to tatty, and have a Pub Lunch (Try Steak and Guinness Pie, Bangers and Mash, or the daily special.)
- **Pizza Hut's** in London have (on weekdays) an all you can eat pizza and pasta buffet, which I really like.
- **Prêt a Manger** - I love these Au Bon Pain-like places scattered all over London. Note there is a discount if you take your food to go (to ease crowding.)

The Rock & Sole Place

47 Endell Street, Covent Garden WC2 9AJ

Excellent traditional fish and chips in s storefront. Even if you eat upstairs, venture downstairs to see the fun sea mural.


 Covent Garden


 020 9836 3785

Ed's Easy Diner

12 Moor Street, , Soho W1V 7HN

Right in the heart of Soho is the great little American-style diner, with original 50's jukeboxes for every diner and some of the best cheese-sauce chips (fries) in town!

 Leicester Sq

 020 9836 3785

Dinner


Cheap

Browns (browns-restaurants.com)

82-84 St Martin's Lane

A loud, fun barn of a place. Very British, with a cheap (£10?) pre-theatre menu.

 Embankment, Charing X


 020 7395 6091

Cupucetto's

17, Moor Street, London, W1V 5LH

Might look a little to "red sauce and Chianti bottle Italian), but we've always had excellent traditional Italian there. (Good for lunch, too.)

 Leicester Square


 0207 437 2527

Zizzi

73-75 The Strand, London

Very well done pizza and pasta in a modern yet romantic space.

 Embankment, Charing X

 0207 240 1717


Moderate

Balans

60 Old Compton St, Soho W1D 4UG

Balans is truly a great gay bistro so put up with the "aren't we fab!?" the attitude cause the atmosphere is fantastic, the food is fabulous and the price is good too. And right across from Compton's for great boy watching.

 Tottenham Court Rd

 0207 437 5212



Getti

74 Wardour Street, Soho W1V 3HP
Excellent modern Italian with a welcoming staff.

 Leicester Square
 0207 437 3519



Sri Thai

16 Old Compton Street, Soho W1D 4TL
Excellent Thai in a modern and tranquil setting.

 Leicester Sq, Tottenham Ct Rd
 0207 434 3544



Expensive**OXO** (www.oxotower.co.uk)

Riverside, Oxo Tower Wharf, London, SE1 9PH
Someone wrote that OXO is probably one of London's best kept secrets. Try to catch a window table at sunset, believe me you won't be disappointed. Expensive, yes, but it's worth every penny!

 Blackfriars
 0207 803 3888

The River Café

Thames Wharf, Rainville Rd, London, W6 9HA
The restaurant the begat Jamie “The Naked Chef” Oliver still has the best Italian food I have ever had (keep in mind I have not been to Italy, but Kevin has, and he agrees.) Very expensive and worth every penny.

 Hammersmith (then take cab)
 020 7386 4200

TwentyFour

Tower 42, Old Broad Street, EC2N 1HQ
Nice modern space in the 3rd highest building in Britain with great views of London, also on the 42nd floor of the same building: Vertigo seafood and champagne bar.


 Liverpool Street
 0207 877 2424


Places to Stay Away From


Stay away from these chains: Pizza, Pizza; Bella Pasta; and Spaghetti House.



Shopping Areas

Here are some of the areas to check out for shopping: (All Phone #s start with 0207).

Oxford Street (oxfordst.co.uk)  Tottenham Ct Rd, Oxford Cir, Marble Arch
Start at any of the tube stations listed above, and take in the scene on this crowded high-street, perhaps the most famous shopping district in England. If you think of Oxford Circus as the center, you can go either towards Marble Arch or Tottenham Court Rd, and most of the stores repeat themselves. (Yes, there are two **HMVs**, two **Virgins**, a **Borders** or two, etc.) For cheap designer clothing (think Marshalls in the states) check out **Mad House**. Make sure and take a side trip onto **Carnaby Street** (see below).

Carnaby Street (streetsensation.co.uk/carnaby/cs_intro.htm)  Oxford Circus
Carnaby Street was the epicenter of swinging 60's London fashion, though it is now a little rundown with touristy shops, but you can still find **Merc** (skinhead gear), **The Face** (skinhead and punk gear, including braces), the **Ben Sherman** store, and around the corner on Beak Street, **Lonsdale** boxing gear.


Covent Garden (coventgardenlife.com)  Covent Garden
Touristy (a la Boston's Fanueil Hall) but some good stores, including **Banana Bookstore** in the Covent Garden building itself, and a **Fred Perry** store. Also in Covent garden the excellent **London Transport Museum**.

Islington (islington.gov.uk)  Angel
Yuppified North London neighborhood has not only a slew of fetish shops (**Expectation**, **Hard-Wear** and **Regulation**), but cafes, and shops with lovely ... things. At the other end of Islington, near  Old Street, is The London Architectural Salvage & Supply Company (**LASSCO** – lassco.co.uk) If you are into architecture or interior design, this is worth a visit in the converted St. Michael's Church (Mark Street, off Paul St, ☎ 7749 9944)

Gay & Fetish Shopping

Prowler Soho, 3 - 7 Brewer St. Soho ☎ 734 4031  Tottenham Ct Rd
Prowler Camden, 283 Camden High Street  Camden Town
Kevin calls this "they gay mall," featuring gay books, DVDs, clothing, some fetish gear and of course, porn. (prowlerdirect.co.uk/prowlersoho)

Ben Sherman, 50 Carnaby Street, London  Oxford Street
The First Ben Sherman "concept store." All Ben, All the Time. (bensherman.co.uk)

Clone Zone, 64 Old Compton Street, Soho ☎ 287 3530  Tottenham Ct Rd
Gay clothing, porn and some "accessories", across the street from Compton's. Also a branch in Earle's Court. (clonezone.co.uk).

Expectation, 75 Great Eastern Street, Islington ☎ 0207 739 0892 🚫: Old Street
Rubber, leather and fetish gear, and the cutest sales clerk I know! (expectation.co.uk)

Fred Perry, 14 The Piazza, Covent Garden ☎ 836 3327 🚫 Covent Garden
Fred-a-Palooza. (fredperry.com)

Hard Wear, 70 Essex Road, Islington ☎ 659 8667 🚫 Angel
Specializing in military gear, this shop also carried the very hard to find skinny yellow
braces and Underground boots and shoes. (hard-wear.co.uk)

Lonsdale, Beak Street, Soho ☎ 434 1741 🚫: Oxford Circus
Lonsdale boxing gear (also available at Merc and some Oxford St stores.)

Merc, 10 Carnaby St at Broadwick St ☎ 734 1469 🚫 Oxford Circus
Now largely carrying its own Merc gear, still has some Ben Shermans, a few Fred Perrys
and most importantly boot laces and skinny braces. (merc-clothing.com)


Regulation, 17A St, Albans Place, Islington ☎ 226 0665 🚫 Angel
Rubber, Leather & Fetish store leaning toward rubber gear. The surrounding area also has
some nice shops. (regulation-london.co.uk)

Recoil.557, Redcross Way (cr of Southwark Street) 🚫 London Bridge
Excellent rubber gear. (dirtybastards.com.)

Rob, 24 - 25 Wells Street, London ☎ 735 7893 🚫 Oxford Circus
Gorgeous (and pricey) leather gear and accessories from the Dutch company.
(rob.nl/html/london.html)


The Face, off Carnaby Street, London 🚫 Oxford Circus
Skinhead and punk clothes, including laces and braces.


Nightlife



Though gay nightlife is scattered all over London, there are a concentration of gay pubs in Soho. Some of the other clubs are further out, so plan to catch a night bus or minicab home.  Indicates Sluggo's picks for a must-visit.


Pubs



Pubs open from Noon, and close at 11:00P (10:30 on Sunday). Some of my fave pubs are:


Admiral Duncan, 54 Old Compton Street, Soho  Tottenham Court Road
The scene of a nail-bombing several years ago (a memorial sculpture(?) hangs on the ceiling.)


The Colherne , Old Brompton Rd, Earls Court  Earls Court
Used to be one of my favorite pubs, but was tarted up ("like the bridge of the Enterprise") in the mid-90s, and reports call it rather dire now.

 **Compton's of Soho**, 53 Old Compton St, Soho  Tottenham Court Road
Two-floor pub with blaring disco and lots of skinheads. My first and still favorite London pub!

Duke of Wellington Old Compton Street, Soho  Tottenham Court Road
Sharp-looking Soho pub, with a good looking crowd, but little attitude.



 **The King's Arms**, 23 Poland Street, Soho  Oxford Circus
Friendly pub full of bears (literally packed on Fridays) with an upstairs room.


G.A.Y Bar , 30 Old Compton Street, Soho  Tottenham Court Road
Pub spinoff of the popular London Astoria night on 3 floors with a video jukebox, adding to the gay-village feel of Soho.


The Yard, 57 Rupert Street, Soho  Piccadilly Circus
Upmarket café bar on two levels with the Loft upstairs and an outdoor courtyard.
Closed Sundays



Clubs



Clubs can stay open later, usually 'till 2 or 4 AM. Open 7 days unless noted.


 **Bar Code**, 3-4 Archer Street, Soho  Piccadilly Circus
Cruisy mix of skinheads, lads and professionals. Dancing downstairs (comedy on Monday nights, Bears on Thursday). Open till 1a (2 on weekends).


Bromptons, 294 Old Brompton Road, Earls Court  Earls Court
Old established dance club with lounge upstairs. Drag acts during the week.


Growlhouse at Fire, S. Lambeth Road, SW8  Vauxhall
Friday-only hard house bear bar and cruising “cave.” (growlhouse.co.uk)


 **The Hoist**, The Arches, 47c South Lambeth Road  Vauxhall
Housed in two converted brick railway arches. The main arch has a bar area where people stand and chat, whereas the back half is more cruisy. There's also a metal mezzanine level at the back where people stand and watch what's going on below. See website for somewhat strict dress policy Open Thurs – Sunday. (thehoist.co.uk)


 **Central Station**, 37 Wharfdale Road, Kings Cross  King's Cross
Host to **Gummi** rubber night on 2nd Sunday of each month, and Fetish night (“Tattoos, Crops and Piercing”) on Mondays. Slightly seedy area, so be aware. centralstation.co.uk


G.A.Y at the London Astoria, 157/165 Charing Cross Rd  Tottenham Court Road
Well established, but to my mind inexplicably popular club playing dance classics for a predominantly twink crowd. Frequent PAs from the stars like Kylie, Lisa Stansfield, etc. If camps your goal, go here. *Open Monday and Thurs-Sat.* www.g-a-y.co.uk



Heaven, Under the Arches, Villiers Street, Charing Cross  Charing X, Embankment
Established 25 years and holding firm, very international crowd of mixed ages (e.g. lotsa twinks). Three levels with 2 dance floors, separate bars, VIP lounge and coffee shop/chill out zone. *M, W, Fri and Sat till 5AM.* www.heaven-london.com

LA3, 333 Old Street, Islington  Old Street
Old London Apprentice resurrected with a Sunday gay night. This used to be one of my favorite London clubs, but haven't checked out the new incarnation. *Sundays, 10P - 4A*

South Central, 349 Kennington Lane, SE11  Vauxhall
Friendly local gay pub (formerly Duke's) in the burgeoning gay district in Vauxhall, host to bear night “Chunk” on Friday (till 2am.) *Tue-Sat, 9p-2a, Sun 4p-1a.*


Substation South, 9 Brighton Terrace, Brixton  Brixton
Very. Very. Sleazy.

79CXR, 79 Charing Cross Rd. Soho  Tottenham Court Road
Not much to look at, but decent music and a decent looking crowd, plus one of the few clubs open late in Soho.

 **XXL** 53 Southwark Street, Southwark  Tower Bride, Borough High St Exit
London's best bear night, but more and more, this is just a good casual night out. No dress code, but you'll see plenty of skins and leathermen. Four arches with a bar, dancefloor, smaller dancefloor and “activity area” (yes, it's what you think), and another bar and patio. *Open Sat 10P – 4A and Wed 10P – 2A only.* phatsandsnalls.com

And some straight pubs of note:

The Princess Louise, 208 High Holborn  Holborn
A decent city pub with an amazing Victorian interior pubs.com/louiwc2.htm

The Dove, 19 Upper Mall, Hammersmith  Hammersmith
Riverside pub with a lovely outdoor deck overlooking the Thames. It also boasts the smallest bar in Britain, at 4'2" x 7'10". A regular hangout of Graham Greene & Ernest Hemingway (pubs.com/dovew6.htm)

Guide to Gay Clubbing by Night

Here are my picks for what to do what night. For a good breakdown of the London fetish bar scene, see **John's Guide**. at www.paws.dircon.co.uk/London.htm.

Sunday – Head to **LA3** in Islington. Or if you are there on the right weekend), head to Central Station for **Squaddies** (Military/Skin – 1st Sunday), or **Gummi** (rubber – 3rd Sunday).

Monday – London's surprisingly busy, but the British take their weekends seriously and many are still going on Monday night. Head to **Compton's** till 10 or so, then over to **Barcode** (open 'till 1am), after that you can head to **79CXR** ('till 2am) or **G.A.Y** at the **London Astoria**, till 4am. Also, **TCP** (Tattoos, Crops and Piercing) is at **Central Station** for skins, gummi, sports and other fetish.

Tuesday – Not a lot going on, this is a good night to rest

Wednesday – **XXL** hosts a smaller version of its Sat night party (remember: quality, not quantity!) with only the back two arches open (enter at the side) until 2AM. **Substation South** in Brixton has **Bootcamp** from 10:30P to 3A.

Thursday – I've always had a good time on Thursday at the **Colherne**, then head over to **Brompton's**, with a dancefloor downstairs, and a lounge upstairs.

Friday – Anywhere's bound to be busy, but if you are into friendly bears, you can't beat stopping at the **King's Arms** around 8, and at close, head over to **Chunk** at **South Central** with the rest of the punters (ask anyone where it is.) The bear-inclined (inclined bears?) can also check out **Growlhouse** at Fire in Vauxhall. If you are still haven't met Mr. Right Now, check out the very sleazy **Substation South**.

Saturday – Rest up early, then head over the **XXL**, the most laid back and friendly club in town around 11, it goes till 4am. Alternately: check out **The Hoist**, which is good any Sat, but holds **MA1: Skinheads** on the 1st Sat of the Month, and **MA1: Rubber** on the 3rd Saturday.

Fun London Factoids

Tower of London Ravens: Legend had it that 6 ravens must remain at the Tower of London, or the Tower and Monarchy will fall. Just to be safe There are seven ravens at the Tower today (the required six plus one spare!) Their names are Hardey, Thor, Odin, Gwyllum, Cedric, Hugine and Munin. Oh, yeah, to be doubly safe, their wings are clipped. <http://www.historic-uk.com/DestinationsUK/TowerRavens.htm>

The Fleet River: Fleet Street gets its name from the Fleet River, a tributary of the Thames, which still runs underground through central London, emptying into the Thames at Blackfriars Bridge. pvd1.best.vwh.net/fleet5.html

The Thames Barrier: In 1953 a particularly disastrous flood occurred. Over 300 people drowned and about 160,000 acres on Canvey Island, near the mouth of the Thames, were covered in seawater. May 1984, the Thames Barrier opened in an attempt to tame the Thames floodwaters. The 1716 feet width of the river is divided by nine reinforced concrete piers, forming 9 openings. The four largest steel gates are 200 feet wide and weigh 1500 tonnes each. <http://greenwichengland.com/tourism/barrier.htm>

Londinium: London was founded by the invading Romans in 43AD marshy ground sprinkled with small islands of gravel and sand. The commander of the Roman troops built a bridge Plautius was forced to build a bridge to get his men across the Thames. The Roman settlement on the north side of the bridge, called Londinium, evolved into modern London. <http://www.britainexpress.com/London/roman-london.htm>

The Other Tube: In its heyday, a 75-year-old small-tunnel underground rail service carried four million letters a day and stopped at nine stations between Paddington and Whitechapel. Begun by the government in 1913, but halted for WWI, the tiny tunnels were used to store art treasures from the Tate and the National Portrait Gallery. The first trains started delivery in 1927 under the banner of the Post Office Underground Railway. Renamed Mail Rail, sadly, these have recently been discontinued due to their expense. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2934052.stm>

Hell in a Hand basket: In the 1700's you could purchase insurance against going to hell, in London.

Guidebooks

Sure you look dorky carrying around your guidebooks, but hey, would you rather miss stuff?



Eyewitness Guide to London, DK Publishing

ISBN: 0789448904

I've used this on every trip to London for 10 years now. It has neighborhood by neighborhood information, bird's eye maps, fascinating tidbits, and great walking tours. Absolutely gorgeous production and worth every penny.



Pop-Up Map, Compass Maps Ltd.

ISBN 1841390062

These pocket-size folding maps help orient you and point out major attractions in the city center. A "must have" at all times.



A to Z

You will find this in every cab, mini-cab, briefcase and backpack in London. It is pronounced "A to Zed" and is an indispensable map to London's streets. Perfect for finding that back alley club your friend told you about.



TimeOut London

Weekly magazine with entertainment, shopping and events listings in London, including TV listings, gay and lesbian listings and theatre. Comes out on Tuesdays. Pick it up at the WHSmith's at Terminal 4, start planning your stay!.

Websites

www.thetube.com - Greater London subway and buses..

www.nationalrail.co.uk - UK Rail inter-city and international rail service.

[www.timeout.com /London](http://www.timeout.com/London) – What's going on in London entertainment.

www.londontown.com - Tourist information for London

www.yell.co.uk - London yellow pages online

Central London

