

# Quick London stop can go a long way

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London has been in the global limelight for the past couple of years. In August 2012, the city commanded the world's center stage for the 2012 Summer Olympics. This time last year the capital, as well as the country, was gripped with royal fever again as the Brits welcomed the birth of HRH Prince George, third in line to the throne. The aftermath of these events has made the city a favorite destination among many Chinese tourists coming to the United Kingdom. London is also the perfect stopover city. Seventy-two hours in London will go by very quickly — there is simply too much to do in and around the city to even make a dent in that long list of attractions worth experiencing.

## DAY 1

### 8am A real English breakfast

When you are in London, it's always best to try something local and authentically English. So why not a real English breakfast? For the best breakfast in London, go to Bill's at 13 Slingsby Place, St Martin's Courtyard (near Covent Garden). The food may come across as being oily, but it's very colorful and delicious. If you missed "Bill's," then any of the eateries around Covent Garden are perfect for tourists looking for a late breakfast. For the perfect coffee, pay a visit to Monmouth Coffee at 2 Park Street, where freshly filtered coffee from single farms, estates and cooperatives is served to perfection.

### 9:30am Southbank galore

After a heavy breakfast and some walking in the markets, it's time to discover some history. Get a bus or take the tube to Westminster Station and then walk along the Thames Path, and head off to Shakespeare's Globe Theater and the National Theater complex, plus a series of inviting restaurants and pubs. Then by all means go visit the Tower of London. This architectural marvel has a 900-year



The gate to Buckingham Palace

history as a royal palace, prison and place of execution, jewel house and a zoo. Become mesmerized by the sight of the priceless Crown Jewels, and walk on a path of history through a medieval king's bedchamber. Adult admission price for the Tower of London is £22 (US\$37).

Within a stone's throw from the Tower of London is the equally stunning Tower Bridge. Inside this opulent structure, an exhibition shows how the bridge works as well as its rich history that spans over 119 years. Enjoy the panoramic views from the walkways situated 45 meters above the River Thames.

Of all the bridges over the Thames, London Bridge has the longest and most turbulent history. It was the only bridge over London's river until Putney Bridge opened in 1729. Take a walk on London Bridge and treat yourself to some unparalleled views of the pretty Tower Bridge.

For lunch, there are plenty of nice options available around this area. For an authentic British dining experience head to the Balls Brothers Hay's Galleria restaurant, this is housed in the attractive, relatively tranquil open-air galleria on the River Thames promenade between London Bridge and Tower Bridge.

Saturday mornings and lunchtimes in London are also a good time to go and see a local market in action. The best market to go and see is the Borough Market located opposite London Bridge. It is

London's oldest covered fruit and vegetable market. You can get freshly fried cod fish and chips at one stall and grilled British sausages at another and freshly made English apple cider too.

### 2pm British Museum

From the Hay's Galleria walk to London Bridge and take a bus to Holborn or Russell Square and then take a short walk to the British Museum. It exhibits the works of man from prehistoric to modern times from around the world. Highlights include the Rosetta Stone, the Parthenon sculptures, various ancient Chinese and Indian artifacts, a large archive library and the mummies from the Ancient Egypt Collection. Admission is free, except for special exhibitions that require separate tickets.

### 4pm Trafalgar Square and Westminster

It is recommended you take a double-decker bus to Trafalgar Square, which will allow you to see London in its true colors. Explore Trafalgar Square and visit the National Gallery, which displays more than 2,000 Western European paintings from the Middle Ages to the 20th Century. Discover inspiring art by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Gainsborough, Turner, Renoir and Van Gogh. Admission is free. Afterwards walk down the Mall to Westminster Square, opposite the Houses of Parliament. Enjoy being in one of the most symbolic parts of London. Then take a walk to

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Westminster Abbey, where you can hear music sung by the highly skilled Boys' Choir each afternoon (except Wednesday and Sunday). It's a thrilling experience, and a perfect way to see the Abbey itself without having to battle the crowds as the church is closed to normal tourist traffic about an hour before Evensong begins.

### 7pm River Thames and the London view

At night, London takes on a vibrancy with its flashy neon lights everywhere. To get the best river views in the evening, take a walk across Waterloo Bridge, right off the Strand, stop about midway and look around. In front lies the extensive National Theater complex and the remarkable London Eye. To your right are the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. To your left, the brightly lit dome of St Paul's Cathedral emerges from the shadows, along with the rest of the city of London including the famous Natwest Tower and the Shard, the tallest building in Europe. The views and the walk can be quite stunning too.

## DAY 2

### 9:30 am Explore the city

After breakfast, head to the 135-meter-high London Eye, the tallest Ferris wheel in Europe. Each capsule holds 25 people, and on a clear day the ride provides fabulous views across the capital. You can see many of London's top

attractions. The nearest London Underground station is Waterloo, which is within easy walking distance. Ticket prices start at £26.55 for adults if booked online. Do try to get there as early as possible to avoid the queues.

After you have marveled at London from above, then either take a stroll along the River Thames or take the tube to Southwark or Blackfriars station to visit the Tate Modern on the banks of the Thames. The Tate is Britain's national museum of modern and contemporary art. Admission is free, and inside you'll find temporary exhibitions by top artists from around the world.

From the Tate Modern, you can walk along the London Millennium Footbridge, a steel suspension bridge for pedestrians crossing the River Thames, linking Bankside with the City of London. The views can be spectacular even on a dull day.

Once you cross the bridge you will reach the City of London and specifically St Paul's Cathedral. Designed by the famous architect Sir Christopher Wren, St Paul's Cathedral is one of the most famous sights of London, with its dome dominating the skyline for 300 years. To enjoy a view of the City of London from a different angle, climb to the Golden Gallery and take in the breathtaking panoramic sights.

There is a lovely cafe and a restaurant where you can enjoy a traditional English lunch and marvel the views across the city. The entrance



Fortnum & Mason store



St Paul's Cathedral is one of the most famous sights of London.



Afternoon Tea set at Fortnum & Mason

fee to go into the main Cathedral is £16.50 for adults.

### 2:30pm Leicester Square

From St Paul's you can either take a bus or taxi to the popular Leicester Square. Should you wish to burn the calories and admire the views while enjoying a long gentle stroll, which should take less than an hour on average, then you can do that too. If you wish to walk then commence from St Paul's to walk along Ludgate Hill, Cannon Street, then Fleet Street, and finally onto the Strand before turning right into Leicester Square upon reaching Trafalgar Square (it's all one long road that changes names as you walk along). London's famous China Town is just around the corner and is full of activity all evening long. For late evening bites, book a table at the famous "Leicester Square Bar and Restaurant" at Radisson Edwardian Hotel.

### 5pm Watch a musical

A trip to London is not complete without watching a West



Double-deck bus is the signature of London

End musical show. If you have forgotten, don't worry as last-minute tickets can be found at the TKTS Ticket Booth in Leicester Square. Before you come here, a good planning tool is the London Theater Guide Online ([www.londontheatre.co.uk](http://www.londontheatre.co.uk)), which has up-to-date news on the city's productions, including the West End and the Fringe, with links to newspaper reviews and online ticket agencies.

## DAY 3

### 9:30am Singing in rain

After breakfast take a well-deserved walk in London's renowned Hyde Park, and enjoy the various gardens. There is the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain to marvel at. Made with 545 individual pieces of granite, the fountain is made to show the two sides of Princess Diana's life: Happy times, and turmoil.

### 11am Shop in Style

Head off to nearby Oxford Street, which is London's

equivalent to Shanghai's Nanjing Road W. Here you'll find all the major designer goods on offer at shops and big department stores like Selfridges. Then, if time allows, make sure you visit the famous British store, Harrods in Knightsbridge, where you can buy almost anything under the sun.

Check out some of the beautiful art galleries on Cork Street, and the nearby Mayfair area. For over 90 years, Cork Street has been famous for its art galleries. These days it's popular with Chinese tourists who want to buy the best contemporary British art pieces. After some shopping, nothing beats taking a well-deserved rest and some afternoon tea at the Ritz Hotel in London at 150 Piccadilly. The hotel, which opened in 1906, has hosted many global dignitaries including Sir Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

### If you go



British Airways, and Virgin Atlantic Airways each have one daily non-stop flight from Shanghai Pudong Airport to London Heathrow Airport. The best way to get into Central London from Heathrow Airport is on the Heathrow Express train. Tickets for adults at the time of writing are £21 one way or £34 round trip. It takes 15 minutes to get to Paddington Station, where you can connect to the District, Circle, Hammersmith and City or Bakerloo trains on the Underground or catch a cab to your final destination.

