

# London Guidebook

## How to get to London

### How we got to London

Mr. Špaček hadn't found any cheap flight, so we travelled by bus. We drove off from Prague (by a Student Agency bus) and the journey to London took about seventeen hours. The way back to Prague, because of a congestion and because Eurolines have the worst buses, took more than twenty hours. However, the journey was OK and I hope your journey will be good too.

### How to get to London

The best way to get to London is to fly by plane, but if it is impossible and you must travel by bus, do NOT choose Eurolines (it's uncomfortable and slow). On the other hand, for example Student Agency is a very good company. In their buses, there are small televisions (with a lot of films, music and games) for each passenger and free refreshments (coffee, tea, etc...).

When you travel by plane, the journey takes about one and a half hours. If you travel by bus and you don't have any problems, it takes about seventeen hours. And there is one more possibility, to go by train. If you travel by train, the journey takes about twelve hours. I recommend to take the plane, because as you can see, it's much faster than train or bus.

### About the trip

From Prague (Florenc Station) to London (Victoria Station) via Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and France.

1. The way through the Czech Republic is dull and unexciting.
2. The way through Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium too.
3. The way through France is quite interesting.
4. The way through the Eurotunnel is very exciting, the bus pulls into a big train and the train brings the bus safely to the other side.
5. The last part of the way, England, is interesting and I recommend you to look out of the bus window to see the countryside around you.

Zdeněk Kotrlý

## Accommodation

Our accommodation was great. We stayed in a hostel. The hostel was in Holland Park. It was clean and sometimes friendly. But we had to be quiet because a receptionist told us, "If you are noisy, you will have to go out." You can buy souvenirs at the reception - for example a pen, a letter etc. Girls had one house and the boys couldn't go into this house. In the girl's bedroom there were 12 beds, 2 sinks and 1 shower. On the first day, there was no hot water, but on the next day everything was good. Near the hostel, there was a Japanese garden with a small lake and nice flowers. Opposite the hostel, there was a football playground and we could play football. A lot of trees and some flowers grew near the hostel. Next to the hostel we could borrow bicycles. The underground was 5-10 minutes far. Let me tell you a funny story now:

It was at half past twelve at night. We were sleeping and suddenly I heard an alarm. I didn't know if I was dreaming or awake. Suddenly one girl said, "It's an alarm." And another girl answered, "Yes, it is." In the morning, I told this story and everyone laughed, because they had just talked about it. But most of the girls slept so hard that they didn't hear the alarm. Our accommodation included breakfast, lunch and dinner.

We had sausages, toast, yoghurt, some fruit, muesli and a roll, or white beans in red sauce for breakfast. We had three kinds of juice, or black tea or water to drink.

For lunch, we got a packet with a sandwich, an apple, crisps, a biscuit and a bottle of water. We got the packed lunch after breakfast.

We had vegetable salad or soup for dinner. The main course was for example fish and chips or a hamburger or pasta with tuna and tomatoes.

Markéta Čistecká

## Holland Park

Holland Park is a park in the centre of London where the hostel in which we stayed during our trip to London is located (YHA London Holland Park). The area of the park is about 22 hectares (54 acres).

Contrary to Prague, there are bicycle stands there (and everywhere in London), in which you can rent a bicycle and give it back at another stand.

There is a lot of different kinds of trees in Holland park, for example oaks, limes, conkers, cherry trees (so you should go there at the beginning of June, when the cherries are in full bloom), maples, birches, hollies, etc.

Really interesting is the part of the park at its centre, the Kyoto Garden. It's a Japanese garden close to the hostel. It's a small, but a really nice piece of Japanese culture. And close to this Kyoto garden, there is a giant chess set.

Jáchym Herynek



*A picture of the hostel we lived in*



**Map of the Holland Park and its surroundings**

## **Warning!!!**

If you visit for example the Houses of Parliament, you must go through a careful check. The police men will check your bag or other luggage like at the airport. If you have got any sharp things (e.g. a knife), it's quite a big problem. They'll go with you into a small room and ask you a few questions about the knife, your past and your visit to Britain. Then they'll probably tell you that you must go to a near police station and answer other questions, but I think they say it only to make you scared and it most probably isn't a real threat.

If you are lucky, you must "only" sign a piece of paper, that you committed an offence. If you've got bad luck, you must go to the police station and possibly leave Britain. The first case is much more probable, but I recommend you to check your luggage before you go there, because the policemen aren't very friendly and the interrogation isn't a relaxing experience.

Matěj Korčák

## **Houses of Parliament**

The British Parliament meets at the Westminster Palace, which is a beautiful palace in the centre of London. You won't miss this palace thanks to the famous Elizabeth Tower with the bell called Big Ben inside, which is one of the most popular sights in London.

The Parliament is called Houses of Parliament because there are two "houses" in the parliament: The House of Commons and The House of Lords. The parliamentary system in England is very interesting. The difference between the two houses is that the politicians in the House of Commons are elected by the people, whereas the politicians in the House of Lords are chosen by a voting commission represented by hundreds of people important for England. You can also become a Lord if someone older from your family was a Lord before

or if you were a Prime Minister. Those two houses are designed to balance each other's power and I think that it's fascinating.

There are many interesting things in the Houses of Parliament. Both houses are separated and Lords and Commons can't visit the others' house. There are two long corridors in the House of Commons which are used for voting. When a result of a vote is unclear, instead of precise electronic voting the politicians split into two rooms, those who vote yes go into the Aye Room, those who vote no go into the No Room. When they leave the room they are counted and the results of the vote are clear. There also is a very interesting ceremony in the House of Lords, every year the Queen comes into the house and traditionally starts another period of the function of the house.

The Houses of Parliament are one of the most interesting things in London and in my opinion it's a must to be there, it offers great information about the British politics and traditions and shows you how different it is from other systems. It would be a shame not to visit it.

Jiří Švejda



*The Westminster Palace with the Elizabeth Tower*

## **The Tower of London**

The Tower of London is the oldest sight and building in London. It is also a very famous castle which is visited by many tourists every year. The oldest part is called the White Tower; it is the building with the four little towers. Today there is a very interesting exhibition about the history of the Tower. To the Tower of London belong also the battlements or the houses of the Beefeaters. The Beefeaters are soldiers who watch over the Tower. To become a Beefeater you must have been a normal soldier for a long time and you must have a lot of military experience. In the Tower you can also find a palace with the crown jewels. The British crown jewels are not just of one set like the Czech crown jewels. There are many different pieces.

The Tower was also a very famous and feared prison, so there is also a torture instruments exhibition. Many prisoners were punished at the Tower, for example the wife of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn. The last prisoner to be punished there was a German agent in the Second World War.

The Tower of London is an amazing and very interesting sight. So if you are in London, you should definitely go there.

Fabian Blažek



*The Tower of London*

## London Eye

London Eye (formerly called Millennium Wheel) is a 135 meters high observation wheel (since 1999, the highest in Europe), standing on the bank of the Thames. Many European countries were involved in its construction, among them also the Czech Republic. The hub was manufactured in the Czech Republic, by Skoda Company. There are 32 pods on the wheel; the speed of the wheel is 0,26 m/s. The admission is £ 20 for adults; children up to the age of 12 pay £ 10. The wheel was opened to the public on December 31, 1999. Despite the fact that the London Eye is very popular, it is financially unprofitable. London Eye offers an unforgettable view over the whole of London. One can see 40 km away in good weather conditions and even catch a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower.

Barbora Škrobáková



*The London Eye*

## Churchill War Rooms

When you travel to the United Kingdom, you should visit the Imperial War Museum. There are four parts to this museum. They are: IWM London, IWM Duxford, HMS Belfast,

Churchill War Rooms and IWM North. When I was in London, the Imperial War Museum London was closed so I decided to visit the fourth part - Churchill War Rooms.

Let me give you some general information first. Everybody knows who Winston Churchill was. For the people who don't know anything about him: Winston Spencer Churchill was the greatest prime minister of Great Britain in the years 1940-1945 and 1951-1955. In the Second World War he was one of the most important politicians.

In 1940 when German air forces, called the Luftwaffe, were bombing London, British Navy forces in the English Channel, and the rest of South-East England, the British General Staff needed a place which was safe from bombing. It means a place below the ground. So a net of big bunkers was opened (I said open because the bunkers had been built in the year 1938) under The Ministry of Defence for the British government. British armed forces in The Second World War were controlled from this place.

There is the Cabinet Room where Churchill's government was in conference in the centre of ChWR. It's quite a big room with many tables and chairs and there is one big chair for the Prime Minister. Behind this chair, there is a big map of the world on the wall. Near the Cabinet Room is the Map Room. The most important officers of Churchill's Cabinet discussed there. Next to the Map Room there is a small room with two cupboards and one table and one chair. There is just one telephone, a red telephone on the table. It is a direct link to Washington, to the President of the United States of America, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The total area of Churchill War Rooms is 12,000 m<sup>2</sup>. The bunkers were constructed for 528 people and there is a hospital, a dining room, a shooting range and many bedrooms there. In the year 2005, the Churchill Museum opened here too. There you can learn a lot of information about the famous Prime Minister. You can see his revolver, his uniforms (navy uniforms) and much more.

When I was there I had only one hour to observe all the things in the museum and then I had to leave. But I think, I could spend several days in there! It was the best museum I had ever seen.

Richard Mašek

## **Pope or Queen?**

### **History of the Church of England**

I think you know that in England they don't have the Catholic Church. Let me tell you why. The distance between Rome and London is 1 500 kilometres. In the Middle Ages, when the Church of England was founded, people didn't have airplanes, cars and trains and 1 500 kilometres was a long way to go. This is one of many reasons, but the biggest reason is different. In the first half of the 16th century Henry VIII was the king of England. He wanted to have a son, but his wife couldn't have a male child. Henry VIII met another woman, her name was Anne Boleyn. She was very beautiful and that's why the king fell in love with her. He wrote to Pope Paul III to ask for permission to get divorced from his old wife and then get married to Anne Boleyn. Pope didn't allow that, but still, Henry got married to Anne. Pope's reaction was the excommunication of King Henry VIII. Then Henry VIII wanted to found his Church of England, of which he became head. He wanted to have his Church without the Pope. He could do it, but he didn't want a Protestant reformation like Martin Luther, John Calvin etc. Under the reign of queen Mary I Church of England was reunited with the Catholic Church, but her successor Elizabeth I founded it again.

## Some of the biggest differences

We can divide Christianity into four capital directions: Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox and Anglicanism. Church of England refuses the demands of Rome and also the European system of reformation. I think that it is more liberal than Rome, but more conservative than Protestants. The official head of Church of England is the king, today queen Elizabeth II, but in practice, it is the archbishop of Canterbury. One of them was Thomas Cranmer, who did some reformations.

Matouš Benda

## St Paul's Cathedral

On the first day of our trip to London we visited St Paul's Cathedral. Even from a distance, you can see the magnificence of this building, which was designed by an architectonic genius Christopher Wren.

The inside of the cathedral is full of statues of British war heroes. There are also some candle holders. I was very impressed by them, because of their beautiful tiny sculptures that are carved into the wood.

In the middle of the cathedral there is a wonderful mosaic and if you look up, you can see the gorgeous ceiling with many colours.

If you go up to the first floor, also known as the Whispering Gallery, you can whisper something to the wall and the person standing opposite to you on the other side can clearly hear you. I was amazed by this fact.

I almost forgot to tell you about the basement of the cathedral. You can see some war monuments there and if you're hungry, you can have a snack in the café.

And finally, the thing I enjoyed the most, the view from the top of the cathedral. After climbing up a lot of bumpy narrow stairs, there is a wonderful reward. You can see almost the entire London from this point.

The City, the London Eye, Tate Modern and many other well known buildings are visible from the top of this beautiful monumental building - St Paul's Cathedral. It's definitely worth a visit!



*The St. Paul's Cathedral at night*

## **Atmosphere at the St Barnabas Church**

On Sunday morning we woke up, had breakfast and got ready for the new day, which was announced to be physically exhausting.

"Great," I said to myself with a bored face expression, "another day of nonstop walking." I was really enjoying the trip to London and our programme was interesting and exciting, but I was very tired from the bus ride to London and my feet kind of hurt from the last day, when we had travelled and walked a lot.

So on Sunday morning we went to St Barnabas Church. I am a believer and I am proud to be a Christian, but I don't go to church that much and when I do, there always are a few minutes when I'm bored and don't pay attention.

But the service at St Barnabas Church was completely different.

From the moment I sat down, I felt being really involved in what was going on in front of me. I listened to the vicar very carefully and I understood him very well, because he translated the complicated religion terms into words or situations that younger people understand more easily. During the service my morning tiredness disappeared, because it would be very hard not to pay attention, because it was so interesting.

Overall the atmosphere of the church was unforgettable. After the service, which I enjoyed very much, we could have some tea and biscuits with the locals and have a chat with them, which was very nice of them too.

The service at St Barnabas Church was beautiful and very exciting and I definitely recommend to visit this wonderful church.

Martin Novák

## **Atmosphere in Soho**

Soho is a part of London near the city centre and it is very interesting, but I won't speak about its history, I will speak about its atmosphere.

I went there with some friends and first we went to the Piccadilly Circus, the London meeting place number one. It was very crowded and there were some street artists who were dancing to the Gangnam style music.

Then we went to the biggest toy shop in the UK. The people there were very friendly and the shop was incredibly big.

After that we went to Covent Garden through all the narrow streets and we saw many pubs, clubs and bars.

In Covent Garden there were many street artists. There was a wizard, a singer or an imitator of Charlie Chaplin. They did great shows and the atmosphere was very friendly and relaxed. If you want to meet new people, watch street artists or just have a great time, Soho is the best place in London to go!

## **East End**

We went to see this very interesting quarter of London after we had visited Greenwich. It was very distinct from all the other quarters we had visited. Primarily, because it isn't very rich. The people there aren't too rich, the houses don't have luxury architecture, the fast food restaurants aren't too expensive and all in all, the mood in East End is like in another world, definitely not in London.

And East End's street art is really amazing! On almost every house, there is at least one graffiti. But it wasn't unexceptional graffiti, there are many masterpieces. The people who live in East End very often protect the great graffiti on their houses. They cover them with



glass, because if there are nice graffiti on your house, it will be more more popular and that's why more expensive than the others.

There is one square, where there are a lot of expressions of street art. For example one huge bow with arrows stuck in the wall or some funny aliens on the roofs or two pink coloured cars in glass because somebody started to steal their wheels.

You must visit the East End (don't forget to take your camera with you :-)).

Anna Lacinová



*There are many street arts in London.*

## **People in London – Knowledge**

When we were in London, we did an interesting experiment with the people in London. We stopped random groups of people on the streets and asked them some questions about the Czech Republic. The experiment was done in the middle of Soho. The point was to find out how much people knew about the Czech Republic.

We got some interesting results. Out of the groups we asked, three of them were from London, the rest of them from all kinds of countries from all over the world. Generally, people from London knew more than the foreign people. Almost everybody from London knew the capital city, had an idea where it is and knew at least one well known person. For example, they knew some sportspeople like Petr Čech, and one group even mentioned Antonín Dvořák. On the other hand, foreign people didn't know much about it, especially the groups from Germany and France, they had no idea what Czech Republic is. It was really surprising.

However, generally we had the feeling that people from foreign countries know quite a lot about the Czech Republic and it was a nice surprise.

Jirka, Matěj, Anička L., Bára

## About our transport

### *London Underground*

- **Central Line**, Holland Park - Holborn = 1x - St.Paul's = 3x - Bank = 1x
- **Circle Line** + **District Line**, High Street Kensington
  - Edgware Road = 1x
  - Victoria = 2x
  - Westminster = 2x
  - Embankment = 1x
- Tower Hill-South Kensington = 1x
- **District Line**, Whitechapel-High Street Kensington = 1x
- **Circle Line**+ **H'smith & City Line** + **Metropolitan Line**, Barbican-King's Cross St.Pancras = 1x
- **Circle Line**+ **H'smith & City Line**, King's Cross St.Pancras- Edgware Road = 1x
- **DLR Line**, Cutty Sark for Maritime Greenwich-Shadwell = 1x
- **Overground**, Shadwell-Whitechapel = 1x
- Northern Line, Chalk Farm-Leicester Square = 1x

### *Bus*

Line 9, sa South Kensington-sa High Street Kensington = 1x (sa = somewhere around)

### *London Ferry*

Westminster-Cutty Sark for Maritime Greenwich = 1x

## Statistics of our trip

### *Places in London*

- St. Paul's Cathedral – 20 + Šk + Šp
- Barbican + Platform 9 ¾ - 20 + Šk + Šp
- Houses of Parliament – 20 + Šk + Šp
- Whitechapel and Spitalfields – 20 + Šk + Šp
- London Eye – 4 + Šp , Tate Modern – 16 + Šk
- Camden Town – 15 + Šk, Churchill War Rooms – 5 + Šp
- City – 20 + Šk + Šp
- Tower of London – 20 + Šk + Šp
- Science Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Natural History Museum – 20 + Šk + Šp

### *Transport*

- **Central Line** – 5x

- Circle Line – 9x
- District Line – 8x
- H'smith & City Line – 2x
- Metropolitan Line + DLR Line + Overground + Northern Line – 1x
- Together – 28x