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## General Information

We flew to London for a week's stay. Dale lived in London for 1.5 years so it was an opportunity to visit previous and new places. This was Beverly's first time.

The original location was established by the Romans in 43 AD as Londinium. As the Roman empire collapsed, they moved out about 500AD. The Anglo-Saxons moved in and London stabilized about 886.

We went to many places in and around London. It is mind-boggling for Americans to see churches, castles and other structures built over **1,500** years ago and some still in use.

One question about traveling to a country with a different currency is, do I need to exchange money. The first factor is how prevalent the local businesses take major credit or debit cards. We exchanged enough for tips, buying inexpensive items and for local businesses that do not take cards.

Another factor is minimizing how much cash you carry. You do not want to pull out a large amount of cash for a small purchase. Split the cash in different pockets so show a minimal amount. You should consider if your debit or credit card financial charges an "international fee". I learned our debit card charged a 3% fee and a poor exchange rate so we switched to our credit card with no fee and fair exchange rate.

## Key Places

### London Eye

This is over the Thames River close to a pedestrian bridge at Northumberland Rd and between the Westminster and Waterloo bridges. We walked from Trafalgar Square for 0.8 miles.

I suggest buying tickets from their website or reputable online company (we use Viator and Expedia). Even with a reservation, there can a bit of wait. The Eye has a moving entry so it does not stop unless a passenger needs assistance like a wheelchair

The cars are enclosed and we had lots of room to walk around to see and take pictures. There was a couple from New Zealand with a stuffed Kiwi being used in pictures. It takes about 30 minutes to do a rotation.

You can easily see the House of Parliament and the Tower (wrongly called Big Ben). You can see most of Buckingham Palace. The River Thames curves around so could not see the Tower Bridge (many wrongly called it London Bridge). London Bridge is close by with a platform structure.

Near the Eys are many shops and a very nice looking Carousel. The view from the Carousel was used in a Thomas Kincaid painting – minus the Eye.

### **Tower of London and Crown Jewels**

The history goes back to \_\_\_\_\_

We did a guided tour with a **Beefeater** – no definitive answer on how the name started. They are official guards of the tower and live here with their family. They are retired military people. He shared a lot of information and was very funny at times. If you go, take the guided tour. After the guided tour, we are on our own and when to see the Crown Jewels – incredible!

There is a “Changing of the Keys” tour involving the dungeons. I tried booking tickets a month in advance, but already sold out. Try again if / when return London.

### **River Thames cruise**

Our tour of the London Eye included a cruise on the river. Being below the ground level limits the view to the sides of buildings and the bridges. It was okay. If you love bridges, this is recommended.

### **St Paul Cathedral**

The original church was built in 640AD and was damaged or destroyed several times due to fire, including the Great Fire of London fire in 1666. The church had to do a major restoration from 1924 to 1930. It was damaged but not destroyed during WW2. Some claim it was an aerial landmark. There have been more restorations through 1960s.

Across the street, we went to ??? pizza. They use an oven to bake the pizza. It was very good and worth trying if you are in the area.

Further information at Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\\_Paul%27s\\_Cathedral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Paul%27s_Cathedral)

### **Beatles Abby Rd Crosswalk**

The Beatle's Abbey Road album from ??? has them walking across a crosswalk on Abbey Road. This made the crosswalk famous and people want to replicate the walk. We did a feeble attempt to imitate it. It is close to the St. John Wood tube station with a short walk. There were about 30 people at this crosswalk. People would take your picture in exchange for you taking theirs. The recording studio is just down the street.

### **Churchill War Rooms**

Hitler attacked Poland as a start of WW2. He continued to attack and occupy other European countries. Prime Minister ??? was consider/negot/ ??? terms of ???. This was not acceptable to ??? and Winston Churchill became Prime Minister.

The primary government needed a secret area to live and work. They picked a basement under the Whitehall building. They installed about a 10-foot-thick concrete slab in the ceiling and steel support for reinforcement.

Access remained highly restricted until late 1970s. In 1984 the main area was available to the public. In 2003 the restoration work was completed. They did an excellent job preserving the working and living quarter rooms as they would have been during the war including wall maps. After the war, different government agencies controlled the site with different names and in 2010 the name was shorten to Churchill War Rooms.

The museum is very extensive in size, the artifacts and videos, including some people who worked here. There was poor air circulation and considering people smoked made for an unpleasant environment.

## **Stonehenge**

This was a bus tour from London and included other stops. When Dale lived in London, people could walk all around the stones and now people can only walk around them from about 50 feet away.

This remaining part of this site is a mystery of who, how, and why it was built. Experts believe the stones are arranged to track the sun and stars.

It is estimated to have started about 3,100 BC and expanded over the next 1,500 years. Through time people have removed stones for buildings, people could use a chisel to take pieces and structures have collapsed. It became a World Heritage Sites in 1986.

I lived in London in the early 70's and people could walk all around and touch it. As of ??? it is roped off with a path going around it about 50 feet away.

This is like so many other historic sites worldwide built thousands of years ago by people and methods that are foreign to us. Even with all our technology, we are amazed at why and how they were built.

If I was given a superpower, I would want to go back in time a billion years and be able to fast forward through time to see the earth grow, see the Grand Canyon be formed, see the building of these incredible thousand year old structures, ice ages come and go, and SO many other events.

## **Windsor Castle**

This castle was started

## **Bath**

This is pronounced Baaath like an extended soft "a".

The old Roman bath with the hot springs is open periodically. It was not open when we were here.

## **Lacock Village** – The George Inn Wadworth Pub

This was a lunch stop on the tour. We enjoyed Fish and Chips as a common British meal. One thing that has changed from many years ago is the meal is not served in newspaper. A very good idea now considering the consequence of ingesting ink.

## **Lamb and Flag**

There are pubs going back centuries. The Lamb and Flag goes back to ??? and is the oldest in the ??? area.

Google Maps took us down a small street and into an alley with trash cans. Then walked past an old wagon to the front of the pub. As we left, we found an straight alley from James St north of Oxford St.

It is cozy with friendly staff. Of course, we needed to have a Pint of beer to celebrate finding it. There were some sayings engraved in wood ???

## **Harrods**

This London institution store takes up an entire block off ????. When our family lived in London, Harrods could look after you from birth with mid-wives to death with a funeral department. I'm now sure if this is still true.

The departments are exclusive companies such as Channel, Carier, Gooch, Tiffany and SO MANY more.

Dale is a TRUE CHOCOHOLIC so my favorite was the Chocolatier area including an onsite Harrods brand.

The Kerridge's Fish & Chips restaurant inside Harrods is said to have the best Fish and Chips anywhere. It was pricy and superb.

### **Sherlock Homes museum**

This is interesting touring all the items in a multiple story house he lived and worked in – considering he is a fictional character of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

## **Plays**

London West End and New York Broadway are some of the best in the world – there is some conflicts in which is better.

We saw Mousetrap which was written by Agatha Christie, It is a who-done-it play. It has been going on for 72 years ago (yes, years). It is in the Guinness Book of World Records.

Our sets were on the lowest level 2 rows from the very back. There is only one stage set and we could only see half of it with the second level blocking the top half. Fortunately, we could see all the players.

### **Rocky Horror**

Beverly has seen the play in San Clemente and Roseville California. Now she saw it in London where it started.

I'm not a big live theater person, so my experience has this as the MOST audience participation. A large number of people dressed as characters in the play – some were so good they could have been on the stage. Throughout the play, the audience would respond with quips and comments.

Like Mousetrap, our seats were on the lowest level at the back of the theater. Part of the stage set was blocked by the second level. Again, we could see all the players.

### **Les Misérables**

This has been running since 1985. I watched the movie and a online play to become familiar with the story and music. There were multiple very good sets.

It is a French historical novel by Victor Hugo published in 1862. It is a story of a personal struggle that transforms into a success with conflicts and consequences.

Like Mousetrap and Rocky Horror, our seats were on the lowest level at the back of the theater. Part of the stage set was blocked by the second level. Some of the sets were tall and we could not see some sets and players.

### **Phantom of Opera**

This is fiction with some elements based on a real event. The play indicates the chandelier falls to disfigure the character. In real, a counterweight fell killing someone and injuring others.

Our seats this time were on the second level so we could see everything.

## **Personal Places**

## **Shoe store**

My Great Grandfather made and repaired shoes from 1890 to 1907 at 27 ????. His family then immigrated to end up in North Battleford Saskatchewan Canada where my dad was born. Our family album had a store postcard. We took the tube and bus to find it. We had no idea if the building was still there or if there was some type of business or bored up like some places we saw coming in.

There was a very nice store here selling clothes, accessories and SHOES. The women owner was very nice and amazed with the story. Her business partner was not in. The business is Third Coast ????. We exchanged contact information. We took some pictures including from the postcard view.

I sent some pictures and information to my family in the US and Canada. When we get back home, I'll look for more information to send her.

## **Melbury Court**

This is where our family lived while my dad worked in London. We spoke with the manager and he let me go to our apartment to take a picture of the door – seems a bit weird being here, but brings back LOTS of memories. The building is undergoing cleaning.

The ground level stores are more upscale. I worked part time in a small grocery store which is gone. The Commonwealth Institute with its duck pond (site of Truth or Dare escapades) is now condos.

American School London

Us kids attended ASL and my sister and I graduated high school – 50 years ago. I was able to do a tour. The school has grown so much I barely recognized the gym, theater and classroom layout.

## **Express train to Paris** under the English Channel

Travels about 100 mph, but not sure what speed under the Channel Took about 2.5 hours and far easier and cheaper than flying. Going through the tunnel was about 35 minutes.

I was surprised how smooth and quite the ride was.

There are assigned seats. We packed very light for several reasons, including trains not having luggage cars. There is some space at the end of the car for large luggage and some space overhead for carry-on size items.

# **Traveling Around**

## **General Information:**

The things to consider in traveling around are your mobility, language, finances, timing and weather.

Depending on where you want to go, mobility can be a factor. The transportation systems could pose a challenge in some locations if in a wheelchair or if walking distances. Taxi could be the easiest option with the least amount of walking to places.

Even when you can take a taxi to the entrance, there can be a lot of walking or pushing a wheelchair. For example, the Tower of London has a fair distance from the road to the Tower gate and then through all the streets and plazas. Seeing the Crown Jewels is on a flat surface with a fair amount of space around objects.

The language involves being able to read the maps, signs and communicating with others. I have lived in non-English places so can be interesting, fun, frustrating, \_\_\_\_\_. My first Asia living and traveling was the late 60's before the internet, GPS, and translate programs.

Then and now days, you try to learn to say certain words and phrases, but it could be challenging to understand their response. Doing hand and face jesters with weird body movements got most ideas across – I

think this could have been the reason Charades was created. A lot of times this led to fun and laughing. Even with today's technology, the gesturing still works. The biggest factor in succeeding was smiling, be patient and respectful.

Financing is another factor in deciding how to get around. In London, as many other cities, has a great public transportation system. All the methods accept smart debit or credit cards from your bank. Therefore, no need to exchange money into Pounds to pay for transportation.

Driving is not a good idea in central London with small streets with very limited parking and extremely few multi-story parking lots. Out of the city could be an option remembering they drive on the left side of the road.

Walking can be the fastest and cheapest (obviously). We stayed between Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square. We walked to all the places within a mile of the hotel. We used the Tube and bus to the stop near the place and walked the remaining distance. Also walking from the hotel to and from the Tube and bus stops.

Major cities and larger towns have some type of public transportation which is reasonably inexpensive. These would have a bus system and some have trains. The larger cities could have an underground. Getting around can involve transfers and a combination of different types. The people living here need to get around so why not tourists.

A taxi or rideshare company could be the easiest option with the least amount of walking to and from places, but the most expensive.

Renting a car could be an idea. There are so many factors to consider. Can you rent a car if they are available, is your existing driver's license acceptable, are you old enough, does your insurance cover you or you need to buy a local policy. Even if you can rent a car, there are places you should not. Consider what side of the road they drive on, how aggressive are the drivers, what type of vehicles, motorcycles, bikes, maybe e carts and rickshaws and pedestrian habits. And of course the sign language and unusual traffic laws.

The underground and bus systems have numerous lines with some intersecting at various stops. Traveling to most places will involve transferring between underground stops and/or bus stops.

## Specific:

London has a website to enter where you are using your location or entering a place and then enter the destination and click Plan Your Journey -- <https://tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey/>

Various Types of Maps -- <https://tfl.gov.uk/maps/>

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Here is an example of the Tube map.



Walking can be the fastest and cheapest (obviously) for distances you are comfortable with. We stayed between Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square. We walked to all the places within a mile of the hotel. We

used the Tube and bus to the stop near a further place and walked the remaining distance. Also walking from the hotel to and from the Tube and bus stops.

For example, going from Piccadilly Circus to Tower Hill underground (see Tower of London with Crown Jewels). The first segment is start at Piccadilly stop and go to Bakerloo Line to Embarkment stop. Second is District Line to Tower Hill stop. There is a several minute walk from the underground to the Tower entrance.

## Journey results

From: **Piccadilly Circus Underground Station**

To: **Tower Hill Underground Station**

Arriving: **Tuesday 10th Sep, 11:31**

[Edit journey](#) [Add favourites](#)


Travel preferences & accessibility:

Showing routes with fewest changes Using all transport modes

Max walk time 60 mins


[Edit preferences](#) ▼

11:03 - 11:30 27 mins




Transfer to Piccadilly Circus

7 min [View directions](#)




Bakerloo line to Embankment

2 min [View stops](#)




District line to Tower Hill

9 min [View stops](#)



Walk to Tower Hill

2 min [View directions](#)



Tower Hill

[View details](#) [Map view](#)

There are some circles with lines. These are where different Tube lines meet and require walking to other platforms. This example of Baker Street has 5 interesting lines with a fairly long walk between a few of them.

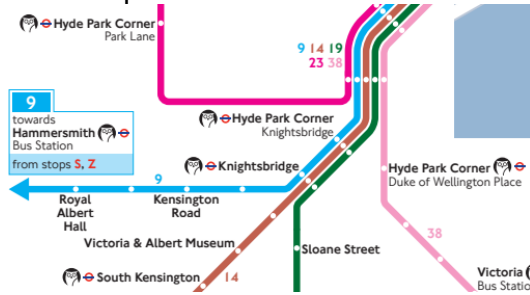


The underground “Tube” has fewer stops and being “underground” moves far faster, but further away from many places. You use a smart debit or credit card at a turn-stall to check in and again when you exit. The easiest way to find a route is using the London Transit App (download or use their website (I do a screenshot of the route)). You can also use some form of route map. The transit workers were very helpful, particularly asking which direction to go when getting out of the Tube.

are great to get to a certain place or close enough to walk or take a taxi. Most popular places were .25 to 1 mile away. We are blessed at our age to be able to walk long distances.

The bus system is slower with all the traffic but can be closer to places with many more stops. Overall, we found using the Tube to be the fastest. You may need to do transfers. You use a smart debit or credit card to get on and do not use it when you exit.

Here is an example of bus routes. This shows 5 lines with some common streets.



Taxis are very plentiful. We took one from Harrods (incredible store) to the building I lived in going to high school. He took a bunch of side streets to avoid the very slow moving main street. It was a couple miles and cost about \$25. This was convenient. Using a taxi will get you the most direct route, but it can take more time with traffic (the Tube could be faster if there is a direct route -then a taxi to the place) and it can be very expensive.

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To: Tower Hill Underground Station

Arriving: Tuesday 10th Sep, 11:31

[Edit journey](#) [Add favourites](#)

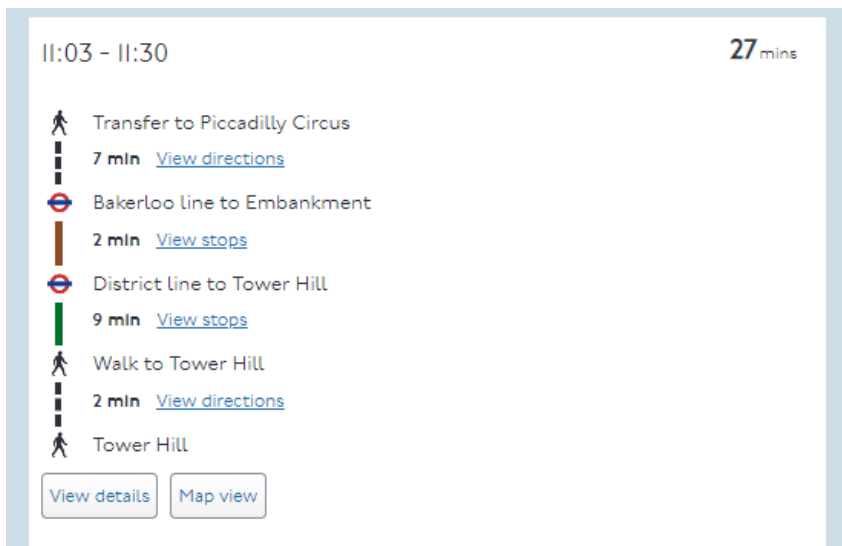
Travel preferences & accessibility:

Showing routes with fewest changes Using all transport modes

Max walk time 60 mins

[Edit preferences](#)





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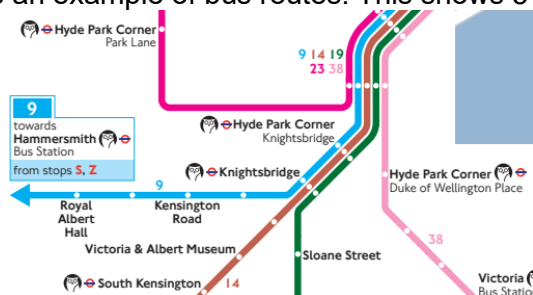


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