

UNITED KINGDOM



It's London, but not as you know it

From pop-up shops to unique drinking experiences, **Paul Ewart** reveals the top 10 spots to eat, sleep, drink and play in the capital of cool

YOU'VE done the Tower of London, trod the well-worn path around Buckingham Palace, gazed upon the kings and queens of Britain at the National Portrait Gallery and had your fill of fish and chips. So, what's next?

While London is one of the most visited cities in the world, many travellers often miss out on some great experiences and unique boroughs.

Veer away from the obvious tourist sights, leave your guidebook at home and spend your time in the city living like a local with these 10 Londoner-endorsed recommendations.

1. To market, to market

Fresh from its opening a few months ago, Pop Brixton is already becoming south London's newest foodie and creative hot spot.

As well as more than 20 mouth-watering food and drink vendors – including local favourites, Zoe's Ghana Kitchen and Baba G's – there's an array of independent retail outlets and a 200-capacity events area hosting TEDx Brixton talks, music gigs and cinema screenings.

While it's constructed from seriously Instagrammable shipping containers, this isn't a venue that's

geared solely towards London's hipster population. Nope, at the core of this development is the community, so expect an experience that is authentically Brixton.

See [popbrixton.org](#)

2. Pull an all-nighter

Film buffs, listen up. Want to attend a bona fide all-night movie screening in what is quite possibly the coolest cinema in the world? It's a cinema lauded by superstar director Quentin Tarantino, who proclaimed it to be his favourite of all-time. Introducing the Prince Charles Cinema.

Londoners in-the-know come for the bargain ticket prices, convivial atmosphere and the famous themed all-night movie marathons. That's 12 hours of back-to-back films spanning quirky foreign titles, cult classics and box-office smashes. While the mind boggles at just how much popcorn will be required to see you through the night, it's the ultimate cinephile experience. Be sure to stick around for your "survival photo" as the clock ticks around to 9 the next morning.

See [princecharlescinema.com](#)

3. One night in Paris

You don't need to board the Eurostar to



MULTICULTURAL: Richard Branson's Babylon Roof Gardens (top); the Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park (middle) where visitors are welcome to join daily prayers; and the Brasserie Chavot in Mayfair (above). **Middle picture:** Alamy

find a taste of Paris. Savvy locals know that sumptuous French brasserie fare can be found a few tube stops away at Mayfair's Brasserie Chavot.

Though packed with French expats, local celebrities and London tastemakers, there's a definite lack of the pretension that would normally go hand-in-hand with a two Michelin-starred restaurant (yep, two!) located in one of London's most chichi boroughs. And what's more, this place offers some serious bang for your buck.

Kick things off with the rock oysters served with a lamb, pork and herb

crepinette (a meatball to the rest of us). While meatballs and oysters may not seem the most likely of bedfellows, this combination is typically French.

Follow with the venue's signature dishes, including up-market versions of French classics such as snails bourguignon and daube de boeuf.

See [brasseriechavot.com](#)

4. Up on the roof

Rooftop views don't come much better than the one from the Richard Branson-owned Babylon Roof Gardens. High on a seventh floor in

Kensington, London skyline vistas meet 1.5 acres of themed parkland.

Although you might expect little substance given the strength of the surroundings, the food is surprisingly good. Contemporary British cuisine with an emphasis on seasonal produce, including a daily fresh seafood station.

And if it's just a drink you're after, you can kick back on the Babylon Terrace (overlooking the beautiful gardens) and sample one of their award-winning cocktails.

See [virginlimitededition.com](#)

5. Pop up and shop

London's new design hot spot, Barnaby & Co is a true pop-up shop, changing location every week, from underground stations to cool art galleries. Featuring a range of quirky and fun homewares sourced from independent designers and small brands, all of whom can't be found on the high street.

Favourites include London-based Rosa & Clara Designs, whose signature flamingo-printed cushions and lampshades scream "buy me!".

See [barnabyco.com](#)

6. Get your Om on

Rise early and join locals who are all keen to start the day the Zen way.

At Battersea Park's Peace Pagoda (a landmark on the banks of the Thames for more than 20 years) each morning, resident Buddhist monk Rev Gyora Nagase makes the short journey from his nearby temple to the pagoda, beating his drum and chanting as he goes.

The saffron-robe-clad monk conducts daily prayers at the pagoda and all are welcome.

See [batterseapark.org](#)

7. Farmyard fun

There can hardly be a less likely area in which to find a farm, but in Spitalfields – a stone's throw from the heart of the city and a few minutes from the packed curry houses of Brick Lane – you'll find Spitalfields City Farm.

An urban farmyard oasis that houses goats, sheep, chickens, donkeys and even a cow, it also has a shop and cafe.



Do you have a great tip for visiting London? Share it with us on Facebook @escape.com.au



ESCAPE ROUTE

LONDON

GETTING THERE

Etihad Airways offers double daily one-stop connections from Sydney to London and daily connections from Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth via Abu Dhabi.

See etihad.com or call 1300 532 215

GETTING AROUND

Save time before your visit and buy a Visitor Oyster card in advance. The plastic smart card can be used on all public transport in London and comes pre-loaded with credit. See visitbritainshop.com

STAYING THERE

Apply your off-the-beaten track mantra to your hotel too with a stay at No.11 Cadogan Gardens, a property that is both boutique and unique. This tucked-away gem is set across four Victorian townhouses in an exclusive leafy address, just off Chelsea's posh Sloane Square. Back in its 19th century heyday, the area was home to London's bohemian artists and poets and their creative spirit lives on in the individually designed rooms and suites of the hotel. See no11cadogangardens.com

MORE

See visitolondon.com

A must-visit for kids, the farm also runs a multitude of events during the year, including craft markets and supper clubs in the summer, alongside the highlight of their events calendar, the annual Oxford versus Cambridge goat race, a farmyard fracas that is just as fun as it sounds. See spitalfieldscityfarm.org

8. Take the plunge

An outdoor pool in chilly London? While it may have nothing on Sydney's Icebergs, the much-loved Brockwell Lido is lapped up (get it?) by locals and in the summer months, there's nowhere better to swim.

Situated in the corner of Brockwell Park between Brixton and Dulwich, this landmark has been at the heart of its community since 1937 and is one of the city's few remaining outdoor pools.

The 50m pool is surrounded by an art deco building housing a newly refurbished state-of-the-art gym and luxurious hydrotherapy area and its



on-site cafe has also won a *Time Out* Eating and Drinking award for "best park cafe".

Swimming aside, there's also a range of regular events on site, from film nights to furniture fairs. See brockwelllido.com

9. Bottoms up

While gin as a drink is as British as they come, the spirit is having a new-found "moment". Having long since cast off its associations with debauched, Dickensian London, a new generation of "ginthusiasts" has been spawned.

The newly created gin experience at the Chesterfield Mayfair offers much more than your average G&T.

Four tasting menus showcase gins that have been paired with different tonics and then a variety of botanicals and other accompaniments, including strawberries, black pepper, edible flowers and lavender.

Guests are encouraged to sample combinations ranging from savoury to sweet, smooth to floral and citrus to spiced. A must-try for both gin enthusiasts and novices. See chesterfieldmayfair.com

10. Spa time

When the stresses and strains of city life get too much, weary Londoners hit the spa. And while staying in the city's top tier five-star hotels are out of reach of most wallets, their world-class spas aren't.

One of the best is nestled in the basement of Marylebone's Landmark Hotel. Recently refurbished, it boasts a state-of-the-art spa with two relaxation areas, a range of massages, scrubs, wraps and facials and a small but well-equipped gym overlooking the pool. The hour-long seaweed oil massage, which is guaranteed to tease out sightseeing knots, comes highly recommended. See landmarklondon.co.uk

AVANT-GARDE: London's newest foodie and creative hot spot, Pop Brixton (top); and (above) a taste of the gin experience at the Chesterfield Mayfair.

While the mind boggles at just how much popcorn will be required to see you through the night, it's the ultimate cinephile experience

HUGE CRUISE SALE



Cruises from only \$88^{pp} per day[^]
+ 50% off deposits[^], BIG savings, FREE bonuses[^] & more!

Princess Cruises

3 for FREE Sale[^]

Book now to get:
FREE spending money,
FREE shore excursion credit
& FREE specialty dining for two.

Carnival Cruises

Full of Fun Sale[^]

Join the fun before 25 Jan 16
& save up to \$800,
pay ½ price deposits
& get up to \$300 spending money!

P&O Cruises

Biggest Ever Offer[^]

Get up to \$400 spending money, FREE
Oceanview upgrades, FREE unlimited soft
drinks & more! Plus, pay ½ price deposits
& cruise from only \$88^{pp} per day!

Royal Caribbean

Live Life BIG Sale[^]

Book before 31 Jan 16
& Buy One, Get One 50% Off,
get up to \$500 spending money,
pay ½ price deposits & more!

Celebrity Cruises

Everything is Better Sale[^]

Choose 2 FREE perks from:
a free beverage package,
unlimited internet, up to
\$150 spending money & free gratuities!

Cunard

2016 Wave Sale[^]

Book your dream cruise for less!
Pay reduced fares & ½ price deposits.
Plus, get up to \$1500 spending money
& FREE Veuve De Clicquot champagne!

Holland America

View & Verandah Sale[^]

Book now for FREE Stateroom upgrades,
10% off shore excursions & up to
25% off select 'Collector's Voyages'
sailings worldwide!

Cruiseabout Exclusive

Multi-Cabin Discount[^]

Take 2% OFF when you book 2 cabins!
Take 3% OFF when you book 3 cabins!
Take 4% OFF when you book 4 cabins!
Take 5% OFF when you book 5 cabins!

FREE New to Cruise Information Evening

New to cruise? Join us for a FREE information session to get the best insider knowledge from our Cruise Experts and industry representatives, including tips on last minute cruising, trends in the cruise market and our amazing product range!

Plus, access exclusive deals only available on the night.

Register at cruiseabout.com.au/events or call 1300 887 170

Wed, 13 Jan, 6pm
Moore Park Golf Course
Tue, 19 Jan, 6pm
Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club

Be there on the night to WIN
a Cruiseabout lucky door prize!
Light refreshments will be served.



Tina Rouse Hill

Our cruise experts would love to tailor your perfect itinerary. Come and talk cruising with us.



Cruise stress-free with our 24/7 Aussie-based Customer Assist.



We'll beat any cruise quote!*

cruiseabout[™]

1300 763 364

cruiseabout.com.au

*Applies to genuine cruise quotes from all cruise lines and registered travel agencies and websites. Quote must be in writing and must be presented to us prior to booking. Fare must be available and able to be booked by Australian passport holders and Australian residents when you bring it to us. Fares available due to membership of a group or corporate entity or subscription to a closed group are excluded. Quote must be for same dates and cabin category. For full terms and conditions see www.cruiseabout.com.au/company/policies/sail-free. *Prices are in AUD, per person, based on twin share, include all taxes and discounts, are correct at time of publication and are subject to availability and subject change without notice. Changes may be due to (without limitation) adverse currency fluctuations, increases to fuel surcharges, taxes & airfares. Accom &/or cruises exclude airfares unless otherwise stated. Sales & Prices quoted are on sale until 16 Jan 16 unless otherwise stated or sold out prior. Visit our website to see updates and corrections to advertised products at www.cruiseabout.com.au/ads. *Conditions apply. Please contact your Cruiseabout consultant or visit www.cruiseabout.com.au for full terms & conditions. **3 for FREE Sale, Full of Fun Sale, Biggest Ever Offer, Live Life Big Sale, Everything is Better Sale, 2016 Wave Sale, Multi-Cabin Discount, Genuine Group Savings:** Terms and conditions for each sale apply, for more details please visit cruiseabout.com.au/deals-specials or ask your Cruiseabout Consultant. **FROM SYDNEY: Flight Centre Travel Group Limited (ABN 25 003 377 188) trading as Cruiseabout. ATAS Accreditation No. A10412.** sst_10jan_12x3_ca