



GRAND PRIX LONDON 2015

TRAVEL GUIDE BY LUCY WYATT & JACK DOYLE

London & The United Kingdom

London is the capital city of **England**, located in the south-east of the country. It's the largest city in the United Kingdom, and the host city of **Grand Prix London 2015**, a Standard-format Grand Prix run by StarCityGames.com. It's home to a wide variety of iconic sights, such as the London Eye, Big Ben, the Tower of London, and of course, a number of fantastic skylines.

General Information

Telephone Code: +44 (00 44).

Time Zone: British Summer Time (BST) - GMT+1 at the time of the Grand Prix.

Emergency Number: 999 (or 112).

Language

If you're reading this travel guide, you'll likely be able to cope with the local language of London and England, which is **British English**. We spell things "weirdly" (read: properly) compared to the Americans. One of the main concerns with British English is a plethora of different regional accents, especially those from the north of England. That said, if you **survived GP Liverpool 2015**, London won't be a problem for you! English borrows many phrases and words from other languages; one could say that it has a certain *je ne sais quoi* about it.

Currency - The British Pound

The currency in England (and the rest of the United Kingdom) is the **British Pound** (GBP). One pound (£) is 100 pence (p). You may hear the currency referred to as “pounds sterling”, and in slang terms as “quid” (i.e. fifty quid = £50). There are a wide variety of wonderful cockney rhyming slang terms for different amounts of money (i.e. a “pony” is £25, and a “monkey” £500) but we’ll leave those to you to discover and share with Justin Turner, a seasoned wizard in the art of cockney rhyming slang.

Available coin denominations:

1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1, £2

Available note denominations:

£5, £10, £20, £50*

* - £50 notes are quite rare and will be subject to a lot of scrutiny in smaller establishments. These notes may not be accepted in smaller shops, on public transport, and elsewhere.



Euros

England is not a part of the Eurozone, and Euros are accepted virtually nowhere as currency. There are certain cash machines (normally in train stations and airports) that dispense EUR, but the majority will dispense only GBP.

Exchange rates

At the time of writing, 1 GBP is worth approximately €1.40 EUR, or \$1.58 USD. As with all currencies, attempting to exchange money when you get here will not be so favourable for you, so we advise bringing some currency to tide you over.

Travelling around London

Public Transport in London

London has excellent transport links, although these can be expensive. You can check out <http://www.tfl.gov.uk> for information beforehand, which contains a journey planner, a fare calculator, and other such useful tools. A **map is included on the next page** - all of the important stations mentioned in the guide are highlighted.

Travel Zones

London is divided into “zones” - the most central zone is numbered 1, and the higher the number, the further from the centre it is. Travel costs on trains and the underground are determined by how many zones you pass through, with an extra fee if you use zone 1.

Oyster & Contactless

You save a **lot** of money and time if you have an **Oyster card** or a **contactless debit/credit card** (with the symbol shown below). The former can be purchased at most major train stations - a refundable **£5.00** fee applies, plus a minimum initial top-up of a further £5.00. Make sure you touch in and out on the yellow readers pictured below, or you will be charged the full daily cap of **£8.80** or up to **£80** if you encounter a ticket inspector. These can be easily missed on the DLR (which gets you to the venue) but are required to open **magical gates** into London Underground stations.





From STN

Eurostar

Museums

**From LGW
or LTN**

Venue

LCY

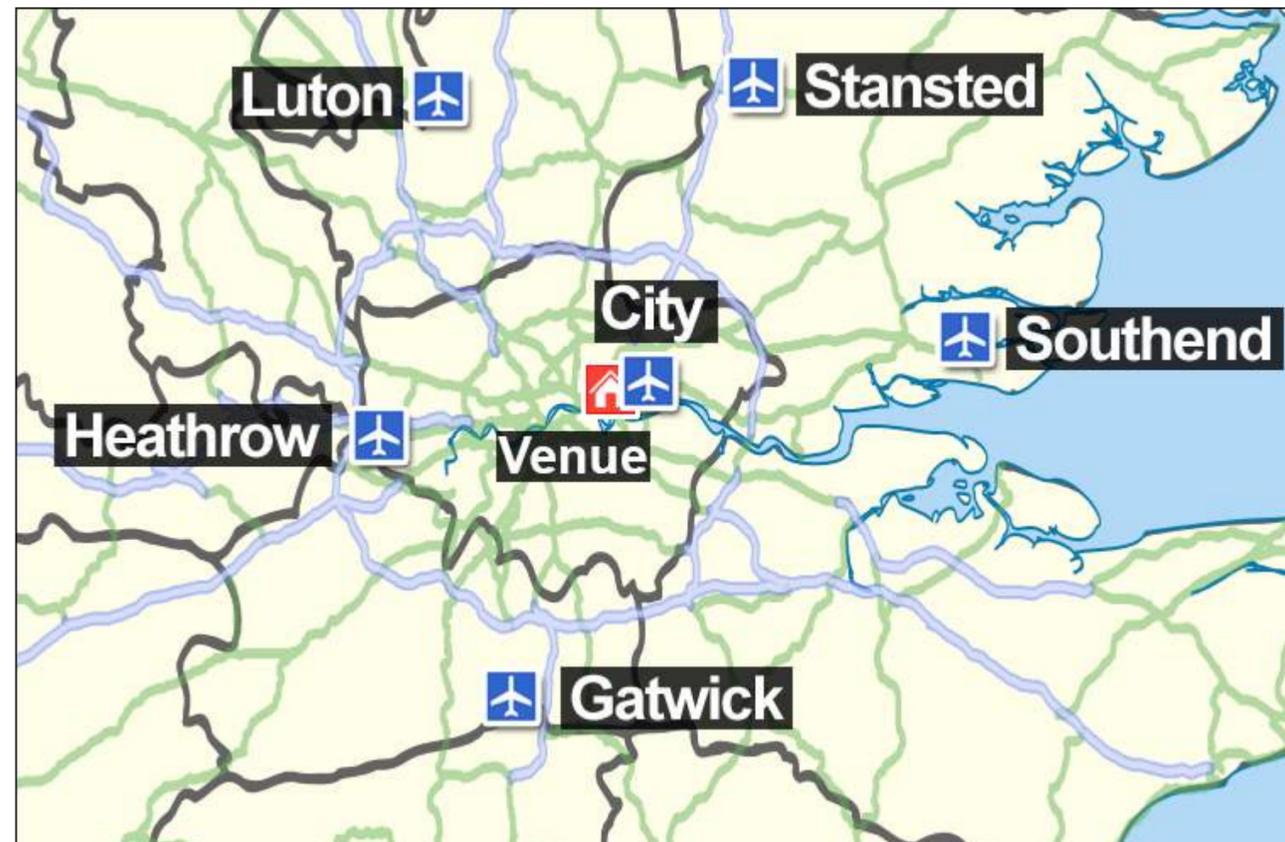
Heathrow

Travelling to London - Flying

London is served by many airports - there are **six** that you might be able to fly into, along with many more up and down the country with **excellent train links** to London.

In approximate order of usefulness, you have **City Airport** (LCY), **Heathrow** (LHR), **Gatwick** (LGW), **Southend** (SEN), **Stansted** (STN), and **Luton** (LTN). These are all marked with the descriptor "London" at international airports.

London City airport is located almost directly next to the venue, and if you can get a flight there, it will be the best for you. It is, however, normally slightly more expensive than other airports. Other airports have a degree of travel time - about an hour in most cases. Read on for information on travelling to the venue from airports.



Travelling to the Venue

GP London 2015 Venue

ExCeL London, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL

Nearest Station: Custom House (Docklands Light Railway [DLR])

Travelling from London City Airport (LCY)

Take the **Docklands Light Railway (DLR)** from **London City Airport** to **Canning Town**. Change trains onto another Docklands Light Railway service towards **Beckton**. This will take you to **Custom House**, where you should get off. Signs to the venue are very obvious as soon as you get off the train. Another alternative is taking a taxi, which will cost around **£10**.

Price: £1.60/£1.50 with Oyster or Contactless. £4.50 for a paper ticket.

Journey Time: 20 minutes.

Travelling from London Heathrow Airport (LHR)

Take the tube from the terminal at which you arrive (they all have Piccadilly line [navy blue] stations) to **Green Park**, then change to the **Jubilee Line** (grey) to **Canning Town**. Change trains to the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) to **Custom House**. Signs are plentiful as soon as you alight the train. A taxi for this route will be extortionately expensive, we reckon about **£90**.

Price: £5.10/£3.10 with Oyster or Contactless. £6.00 for a paper ticket.

Journey time: 60 minutes.

Travelling to the Venue

Travelling from London Gatwick Airport (LGW)

The best value option is to take a **First Capital Connect** train from **Gatwick Airport's** own South Terminal to **London Bridge**. Change to the **Jubilee Line** (grey) of the Underground to **Canning Town** and then the **Docklands Light Railway** (DLR) to **Custom House**, after which signage to the venue is clear. If you are arriving into Gatwick's North terminal, a free shuttle connects the two terminals. We do **not** recommend using either the Gatwick Express or taxi services, as they are far more expensive (Taxis are around £65).

Price: £10-15, depending on time of day.

Journey Time: 60 minutes.

Travelling from London Southend Airport (SEN)

This airport has its own railway station, from which you can travel to **Stratford** (destination London Liverpool Street), and change to the **Docklands Light Railway** (DLR) to **Custom House**. Again, after alighting at Custom House, venue signage is clear.

Price: £14-15, depending on time of day.

Journey Time: 60-70 minutes.

Travelling to the Venue

Travelling from London Stansted Airport (STN)

The railway station is downstairs in the airport. A ticket to the venue will be labelled as **Zone U23* LONDON** from the ticket machines.

Take a train to **Tottenham Hale**, changing to the Victoria Line (light blue) of the Underground to **Highbury & Islington**. Take the **London Overground** (orange) to **Stratford** and then the **Docklands Light Railway** (DLR) to **Custom House**, from which the venue is adequately signposted. Bus services into central London may be available at a fraction of the cost, but will take longer.

Price: Aforementioned return ticket is £33.70. A single is £22.60.

Journey Time: 80 minutes.

Travelling from London Luton Airport (LTN)

From the airport, you can take a bus or walk to the railway station (**Luton Airport Parkway**). The ticket you need should be sold as **Zone U123* LONDON** by the ticket machines there.

You need a **First Capital Connect** service to **London Bridge**, then the **Jubilee Line** of the Underground to **Canning Town**, followed by the **Docklands Light Railway** to **Custom House**, from which the venue is signposted.

Price: Aforementioned return ticket is £28.40. A single is £15.80.

Journey Time: 80-90 minutes.

Travelling by Train

Eurostar

If you are travelling from France or Belgium via train, you can get the Eurostar from Paris, Brussels, and Lille, as well as a few other stations. It arrives into **London St. Pancras International** station.

Getting to the Venue

From St. Pancras, you can travel via the Northern line (black) of the Underground to **London Bridge**. Change to the Jubilee line (grey) to **Canning Town**, and then the **Docklands Light Railway** (DLR) to **Custom House**.

Price: £3.20/£2.70 with Oyster or Contactless, £4.50 for a paper ticket.

Journey Time: 40 minutes.



Hotels

These four hotels are all within a stone's throw (very close!) of the GP venue. At the time of writing, there is no public room block set up by the organisers. These hotels are not cheap; some cheaper alternatives are detailed in the coming pages.

Hotel ibis London Excel Docklands

9 Western Gateway

Royal Victoria Dock

London E16 1AB

£277-348 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon, twin room)

Crowne Plaza London Docklands

Royal Victoria Dock

Western Gateway

London E16 1AL

£415 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon, two double beds, breakfast)

Hotel Novotel London Excel

7 Western Gateway

Royal Victoria Dock

London E16 1AA

£337-419 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon, twin room)

Premier Inn London Docklands ExCeL Hotel

Royal Victoria Dock

2 Festoon Way

London E16 1SJ

£339-403 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon, twin room)

Note - the cheaper price is **without breakfast** and the more expensive price is with breakfast.

Here's a handy link to look for nearby hotels from Friday to Monday. Thanks, Google! Thoogle! <https://goo.gl/dRiAyZ>

Hostels and cheaper accommodation

There are a wealth of cheaper hotels and hostels in the London area. The ExCeL centre is not the best place to find these, however it is very well connected, so finding any accommodation located on the tube line, or better, the **Jubilee line** of the tube, will be good for you. There are far too many to name, so we can only recommend a couple of brands and hotel price aggregation websites.

[Airbnb.co.uk](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)

We recommend using this service if there a few of you looking to travel and stay together - you can find room shares, full properties, and flats for all permutations of price, people, and length of stay. As above, any tube-connected property will stand you in good stead for GP accommodation.

Cheaper hotel brands

In the UK, there are a few brands of hotel that run cheaper than most other hotels. If you can find a suitably located **Premier Inn**, **Travelodge**, or **Holiday Inn** -- or even an **ibis** (normal, budget, and styles) hotel further out of central London, you'll be able to get relatively good prices. [Advance warning: ibis, at least in London, are terrible hotels, consider them a last resort.]



Hostels and cheaper accommodation

If you are prepared for a small amount of travel between your accommodation and the venue, then it is possible to find much cheaper hotels in the surrounding areas; **Stratford**, about 20 minutes away by DLR, is teeming with hotels following its use as the Olympics venue and rooms can be found there for as little as £60-70 a night.

Other locations within simple travel distance are **Canary Wharf**, **East India** (there is a decent Travelodge here) and **North Greenwich**. North Greenwich is connected to close to the venue via a **cross-river cable car** and is a popular place to stay for people attending the conventions and events that happen at the Excel because of the entertaining “commute”.

Travelodge Docklands

Coriander Avenue
Off East India Dock Road
London
E14 2AA

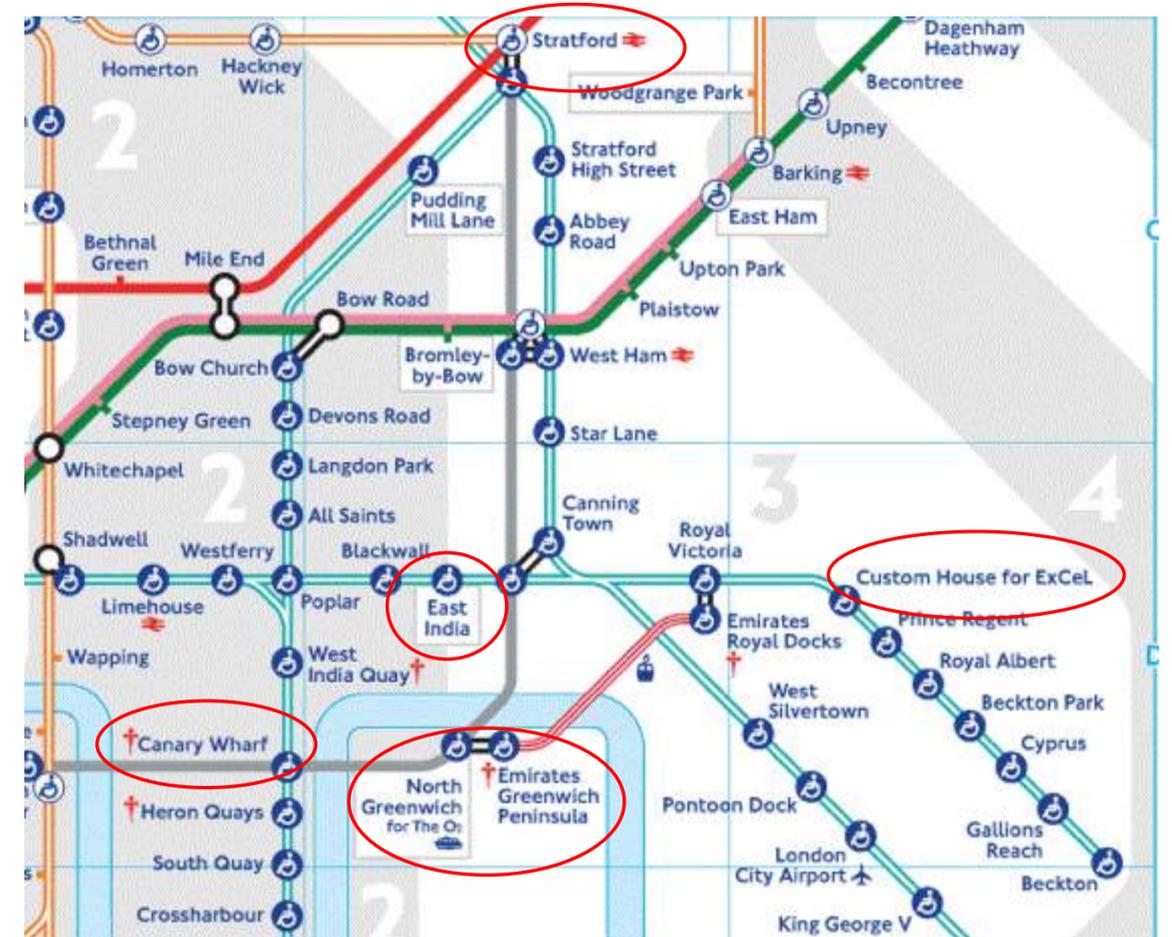
£157-199 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon)

(Double room [no twin rooms], breakfast extra)

Travelodge Stratford

High Street
Stratford
London
E15 2JG

£143-172 for 3 nights (Fri-Mon)



Food & Drink

At the Venue

There is a wide range of foods available in a food-court style along the inner concourse of the venue. Beware though, London's ExCeL Centre is **notorious** for overpriced food. Because it's pretty much a hike anywhere else, they've capitalised fully, and if you want to eat in the venue be prepared to pay **upwards of £10 for a single meal**. Even a Subway sandwich and a drink comes to about £8 as they don't do their lunchtime meal deals. However, some of the options are actually very good food and highly recommended if you can afford it:

Square Pie

Pies, and the English classic **sausages and mash**.

Vegan and vegetarian options available.

Price: £6-9 for a meal, £2 for a drink.

The Italian Kitchen

Pizza & pasta, with a variety of sauces.

Vegan and vegetarian options available.

Price: £6-9 for a meal, £2 for a drink.

Fine Burger Co.

High quality burgers & chips*; beef, bacon, cheese & chicken.

Some more extravagant combinations.

Price: £9-11 for a burger, chips & drink.

The Baked Potato Co.

Does what it says on the tin. Healthier options but still quite filling. Also does salads.

Price: £6-10 depending on filling & sides.

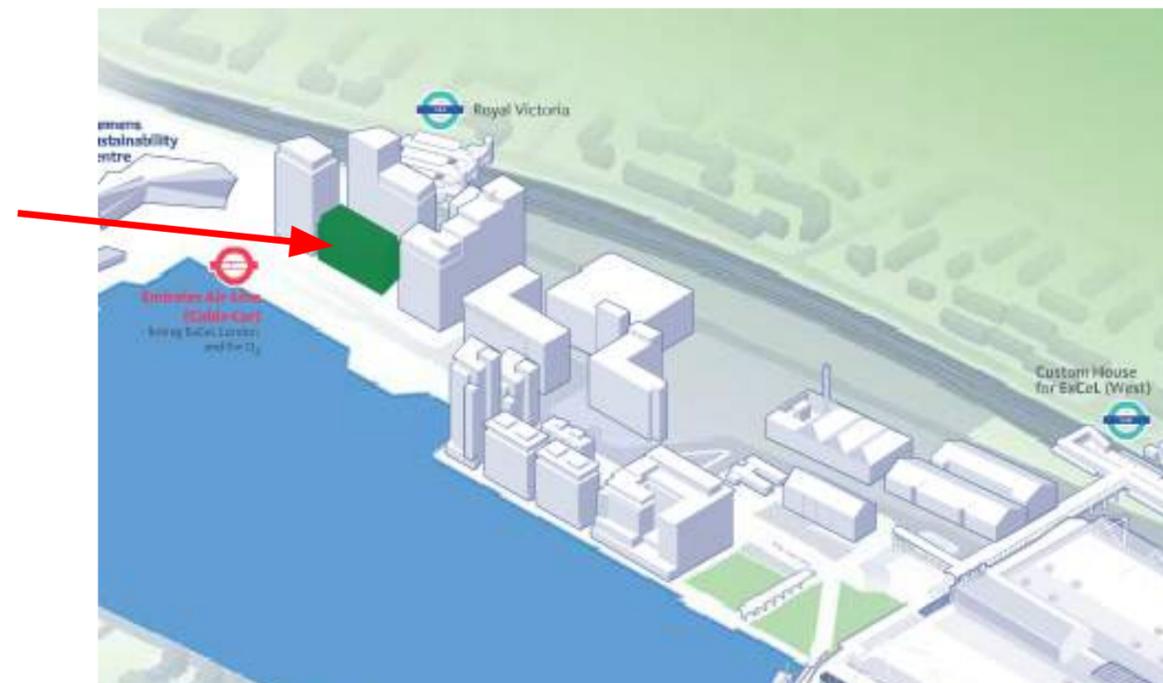
* The English "chips" refers to actual proper chips, which are chunks of potato. Not little crispy things that come in snack packets, or long frivolous things you get at McDonald's.

Food & Drink

Outside the venue

For the more budget conscious, it is fairly advisable to bring a packed lunch to the venue. Most supermarkets in the UK (particularly **Sainsbury's**, **Tesco** and **the co-operative**) offer “Meal Deals” which, while generally not considered a ‘meal’ nor a ‘deal’ are fairly reasonable. For about £3, one can expect to have a sandwich, small pasta or salad, plus a snack and a drink.

There is a **Tesco Express** (a baby Tesco having not long flown the nest) located not far outside the venue, out of the western exit and amongst the hotels, as well as **Nisa**, a convenience store. Note that attempting to walk here during your 50 minute lunch break will probably mean you spend much of your break walking, so if you plan on taking advantage of this, remember to buy your lunch in the morning!



Restaurants

For evening meals, there are a number of restaurants outside the venue and near the western exit and Custom House station. These offer a variety of quality meals but are relatively expensive. Additionally, the ExCeL centre is not far from **Canary Wharf**, which is mostly a business district but also has many highly rated restaurants, bars, shops and cafes. To get there, take the **DLR north to Canning Town**, then change to the **Jubilee line southbound**.

Typical English Food

Fish and Chips

England is great in that we don't really have any food of our own, we just make terrible versions of other nations' dishes and claim that we invented them, such as with the [Chicken Tikka Massala](#). Fish and Chips however, we have a decent claim to. You can find many so-called [chip-shops](#) around on high streets and tucked away down "quaint" (read: dangerous) alleyways. You probably won't find dishes quite so nice-looking, but they'll darn well taste great.



The Cornish Pasty

Another typical English dish is the Cornish pasty, which is beef, potato, swede (or turnip) and onion wrapped up in a short-crust pastry. You can find the [West Cornwall Pasty Shop](#) fast-food chain dotted around train stations, and it's well worth trying one of these national delights.

Typical English Food

Afternoon tea (high tea)

Often relegated to small country villages, the humble **tea-shop** was once the feature of many a street in London. Some fancy hotels and family-run tea-shops still remain, ready for your patronage. While expensive, enjoying high tea, or afternoon tea, is a great experience, and often cakes, **scones** (you better hope you put the **clotted cream on first**, so help me) and sandwiches are a common sight on these ostentatious displays.



Pub Grub

As seen in the hit real-life crime drama **Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps** (aired on the BBC), pub grub is often one of the most accessible and tasty (depending on the pub) cuisines widely available. National dishes such as **pie and chips**, or **bangers and mash** can be found on these menus. Failing that, you can always have...well. Two pints of lager, and a packet of crisps. The travel guide authors recommend **Walkers Cheese and Onion**.

Tourist Attractions - Famous Stuff

The London Eye (londoneye.com)

The London Eye is a national ~~eyesore~~ treasure and can best be described as “a big wheely thing in London”. You can even get in it! Seriously though, if you’re a budding photographer, or simply enjoy stunning skylscapes, you can take a 30-minute ride in the London Eye for around **£20 (€27)**. Depending on time of year, and time of day, lines can be a little crazy, but it’s an interesting experience! It’s pretty close to the **Waterloo** and **Westminster** tube stations, and the **Waterloo** and **Charing Cross** overground train stations.

The Tower of London (hrp.org.uk/toweroflondon)

The Tower of London is bathed in historic mystery, and houses the **Crown Jewels**, famous for their central role in the 2003 hit film **Johnny English**, starring **Rowan Atkinson** (another national treasure). You can get tours from the Yeoman Warders, and learn about torture, coins, kings, queens, and much more. You can even visit the execution site of Anne Boleyn, if that’s what you’re into. An adult ticket is **£24.50 (€33)** and you’ll easily kill most of a day here. Hehe. Kill. Because, you know, murder and stuff. Anyway!

Buckingham Palace (royalcollection.org.uk)

The **home of the Queen of England** and various other royals, Buckingham Palace is a gorgeous building located in the City of Westminster. Tours of the state rooms, the gardens, and the Queen’s gallery (both multimedia-based and guided) are available, with prices ranging from **£20-£35 (€27-47)** (depending on which parts you’re interested in) for multimedia tours and **£75 (€100)** for a personal guided tour. Groups of **15+** get in cheaper.

Tourist Attractions - Museums

The Natural History Museum (nhm.ac.uk)

The Natural History Museum, located near the **South Kensington** and **Gloucester Road** tube stations, is perfect to spend a few hours, most famous for its paleontology exhibits. At the time of GP London, there will be exhibits devoted to their Wildlife **Photographer of the Year competition**, as well as some **butterfly** and **coral-reef dedicated exhibits**. Entry is **free** (although a donation box eagerly awaits your coinage in the main foyer. It is definitely worth your time.

The Science Museum (sciencemuseum.org.uk)

Okay, travel guide readers, I'll level with you. I freaking love the Science Museum. It is simply full of a bunch of cool stuff, and will absorb your day if you're even passingly interested in sciencey stuff, and you'll probably miss the GP if you stumble across interesting exhibits. Entry to the museum is **free**, although they charge for their IMAX 3D theatre films. At the time of GP London, there will be exhibitions about **food controlling your brain (with SCIENCE)**, as well as various **simulations** and **galleries** from steam locomotives to aircraft. Go there.

It's great. It's also near the **South Kensington** and **Gloucester Road** tube stations, and is right around the corner from the Natural History Museum - so when you're done with dinosaurs (which are also kind of **sciencey**) you can turn the **SCIENCE** up to 11!

Madame Tussauds (madametussauds.com)

Madame Tussauds is where nightmares go to become immortalised as wax statues. It houses some incredibly lifelike wax statues of everyone from the Queen of England to Captain America, and is located right next to **Baker Street** tube station. Tickets start from about **£20 (€27)** online, and you should definitely book **online at least 24 hours in advance**.

Tourist Attractions - Other

London is a huge city, and with that comes a variety of cool, famous, cheap, and interesting stuff (this is a Venn diagram, sadly). The six attractions detailed are some of the ones I've visited and enjoyed, and you will too. If you're a photographer at heart, sticking to the Thames will give you some great photo opportunities, and otherwise you can visit some of this stuff:

- ❖ Palace of Westminster
- ❖ British Museum
- ❖ St. Paul's Cathedral
- ❖ Big Ben
- ❖ The National Gallery
- ❖ The London Dungeon
- ❖ Westminster Abbey
- ❖ The Victoria and Albert Museum ("The V+A")
- ❖ Trafalgar Square
- ❖ Sea Life - the London Aquarium
- ❖ The London Zoo
- ❖ And many, many, many more...



If you want a hand with figuring out where to go or what to do, please feel free to contact any of the judges in the last page of the guide!

Local Game Stores/Gaming Locations

Dark Sphere (darksphere.co.uk)

186 Hercules Road
London SE1 7LD



Dark Sphere is the major retail location that we have in London for all things Magic, Wargaming, Roleplaying, board games, and other such nerdy activities. Events are located on their Gaming Calendar (<https://www.darksphere.co.uk/gamingcalendar.php>) and their opening hours are located on their site. Their store is near the **Lambeth North** and **Waterloo** tube stations, so you can pop along on your way to the London Eye!

The Games Club (thegamesclub.org)

Escape Sports Bar & Restaurant
3 Lidlington Place
London NW1 2JU



The Games Club host some great value events and some of London's best competitive Magic players - check their calendar on the site linked above. Their location is near the **Mornington Crescent** and **Euston** tube stations.

Safety & Tips

London is a major capital city, and the location of the Grand Prix itself is relatively safe as areas go. It's wise to keep any bags, phones, wallets, and other valuable items close and keep an eye on them at all times - not only do **pickpockets** and **thieves** operate almost everywhere, but there are also a number of overzealous security personnel that are on the lookout for "abandoned" items.

There are areas of London which are notably less salubrious than others, including **Peckham**, **Brixton** (the home of Electric Avenue) and **Lewisham**. Most tourist locations (with the aforementioned pickpocket warnings) are relatively safe. Public transport is also safe comparatively, but you should have a healthy level of cynicism and awareness, **especially at night**. A common tactic is to **ask for the time**, in the hope that you pull out an expensive watch or phone.

Onto more practical advice, when getting on and off trains and underground tubes, make sure to **mind the gap**. Make sure you pick up an **Oyster card** and your journeys will be much cheaper throughout the weekend.

When you're arriving through the airport(s), especially from the US or outside of the EU (or Switzerland), it's best to **avoid using the term "work"** (if you're judging) **or "card games"** (as most officials will instantly think poker, and therefore gambling). If asked, "attending a convention at ExCeL" is your best bet - ExCeL is a well known venue for such things.

Lastly, currency exchanges that you "stumble" across are placed for their ability to catch out tourists, especially in airports and train stations. If you need currency in a pinch, pop into a local **Post Office** (logo below) and they will be better rate-wise.



Contacting Local Judges



Jack Doyle, Level 3

E-mail: scryus@gmail.com

Phone: +44 7411 207 127 (emergencies only, please!)

Fax: Yeah right.



Lucy Wyatt, Level 2

E-mail: linka.neo@gmail.com

Carrier Pigeon: Just tell it my name, it will find me.



Thomas Ralph, Level 3

E-mail: magic@thomasralph.com

Summoning Ritual: Some say that if you say the word "fizzle" three times, he comes and gets you before you can even finish your sen--