

Tour of London in English – Video

In this lesson, you'll go on a tour of London in English.

Have you been to London before? If so, what did you do? If not, what would you most like to see?

In this lesson, you'll go on a tour of London. You'll learn useful language to deal with common tourist situations, like buying tickets (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/buying-bus-tickets>), going to museums or talking to taxi drivers.

1. A Bus Tour of London in English

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/bus-1119802-m.webp>)

Gina: Hi, good morning.

Olivier: Hi. Can I help?

G: My friends and I are thinking of doing your bus tour tomorrow. Could you tell me more about the route and where we'll go?

O: Actually, we offer many different routes. Is there anything in particular you'd like to see?

G: Well, I think we want the classic London experience: Big Ben, the Tower of London, and so on.

O: In that case I'd recommend our original route. It starts and ends at Grosvenor Gardens, just near Buckingham Palace. You'll cross the river by the Houses of Parliament, then back again near the London Eye. You'll also go past the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, and several other London landmarks.

G: That sounds good. How long does it take?

O: The whole route takes about two hours, but it's a hop on-hop off tour, so you can get off wherever you want.

G: And how much are tickets?

O: If you book online, they're 25 pounds each, or 35 if you buy from the driver.

G: Do you do any kind of group discount?

O: We offer a family ticket, which includes two adults and two children.

G: I'm travelling with friends, so I guess that's no good. I just have one more question: is there a guide, or an audio guide?

O: There's a live guide, who speaks English. If any of your group want a tour in another language, we have audio guides available in 11 different languages at no extra cost.

G: That sounds great. Thanks for your help!

First question for our tour of London in English: can you name five famous London landmarks? If you don't know, 'landmarks (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/landmark>)' means famous places. For example, the Eiffel Tower is possibly the best-known Paris landmark. So, can you name five London landmarks? You

heard several examples in the dialogue. Here are the examples you heard before: Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, the Tower of London and St Paul's Cathedral. You could mention others, like Marble Arch, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, or famous football stadia like The Emirates or Wembley.

In the dialogue, I was asking questions about a bus tour of the city. Can you remember any of the questions I asked? You heard:

Could you tell me more about the route and where we'll go?

How long does it take?

How much are tickets?

Do you do any kind of group discount?

Is there a guide, or an audio guide?

You could ask these questions in many common travel situations; they aren't only useful when booking a bus tour of London in English! For example, you could make questions like this:

Could you tell me more about the tour, and what's included?

How much is the transport?

Do you do any kind of students' discount?

The bus tour we were talking about is 'hop on/hop off'. This means you can get off the bus to visit places on the way, and then get back on another bus later.

Let's make our first stop on our tour of London, and go to one of London's famous museums.

2. Going to a Museum

(https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/640px-British_Museum_from_NE_2.webp)

Olivier: Good morning, welcome to the Tate Modern.

Gina: Good morning. I'd like four tickets please.

O: Actually, general admission to the Tate modern is free; you just have to pay separately for the exhibitions.

G: Oh... Great! I didn't realise that. What do you have on at the moment?

O: We have a wonderful Picasso exhibition, which I'd highly recommend. We also have exhibitions by Franz West and Dorothea Tanning.

G: I'd love to see the Picasso exhibition. How much are the tickets?

O: They're eighteen pounds for adults and five pounds for children under 18.

G: We also have a 7-year-old with us. Do we need a ticket for him?

O: No, under-12s get in free.

G: OK, so two adults and one child then, please.

O: What time would you like the ticket for?

G: Excuse me?

O: With exhibitions, especially popular ones like the Picasso, your ticket is for a specific time. There's a 30-minute slot, and you have to enter the exhibition hall within that time.

G: You mean, I only get 30 minutes to look around?! That's not long enough!

O: No, no! You can stay as long as you like; it just regulates when you can go in.

G: I see! In that case, what times are available?

O: Well, it's 10.45 now. I could give you tickets for the eleven to eleven-thirty entrance slot.

G: That's fine.

O: That's £36, please.

G: Do you take euros?

O: I'm afraid not.

G: I'll pay by card, then.

Do you like going to art galleries or museums? Which London museums (https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g186338-Activities-c49-London_England.html) have you heard of? The Tate Modern, which you heard about in the dialogue, is a famous modern art museum. There are many other well-known London museums, such as the British Museum, the National Gallery, or the Natural History Museum. For now, let's look at some useful language from the dialogue in our tour of London in English.

Near the beginning, you heard this question: 'What do you have on at the moment?' Do you know what this means? 'On' refers to an event, performance, or exhibition which is happening now. You can use it in different situations; for example, at the cinema, at the theatre, or in a museum:

What films are on at the moment?

At the theatre: 'Are there any good plays on?'

There's a really interesting exhibition on at the Science Museum.

You also heard some more useful questions related to buying tickets; for example:

Do we need a ticket for him?

What times are available?

Do you take euros?

Like much of the language in this lesson, you can adapt these for different situations, like this:

Do we need a ticket for my son?

What kind of rooms are available?

Do you take dollars?

3. Buying Theatre Tickets

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/theater.webp>)

Olivier: Hi, how can I help you?

Gina: Hello! We haven't planned this very well, but we decided this morning we wanted to see a show while we are here, and thought it might be possible to get some cheap last-minute tickets.

O: Any idea of what you want to see?

G: No, I don't even know what's on right now, actually.

O: Well, were you thinking a musical, or a play?

G: I think... a musical. It'll be more fun for the kids.

O: Here, take a look at this. These are the musicals we have on at the moment.

G: I really don't know. Can you recommend something?

O: How old are your children?

G: Five and nine.

O: I think the Lion King would be perfect. It's one of our longest running shows, and it's good fun.

G: That sounds perfect! How much are the tickets?

O: Well, first of all, what time would you like to go? We have matinee and evening tickets available. The matinee tickets are slightly cheaper.

G: What time is the matinee?

O: It's at two-thirty, so in about an hour. The evening performance is at seven-thirty.

G: Two-thirty is too soon. I guess it'll have to be the evening.

O: OK, evening it is. The second question is: where would you like to sit? You can choose from stalls, Royal Circle or Grand Circle. Take a look at this seating plan.

G: Hmm... We're kind of on a budget. Which tickets are the cheapest?

O: You could sit in the Grand Circle, near the back. We have four seats together, just here. [point to imaginary screen]

G: How much would they be?

O: Normally, they're eighty pounds each, but because it's last minute, they're down to forty-five.

G: Is it cheaper for children?

O: No, I'm afraid not. All tickets are the same price.

G: Alright, I guess we won't get another chance anytime soon. I'll take them!

Look at five words and phrases which you heard in the dialogue. They're all connected with going to the theatre.

last-minute tickets

musical

matinee

stalls

circle

Do you know what these words mean? How would you explain the meaning?

If you're on a budget, you might want to look for 'last-minute tickets'. You buy last-minute tickets close to the time of the show you want to see. Last-minute tickets are often cheaper. You can use 'last-minute' to talk about other things as well; for example: 'last-minute plane tickets', or 'a last-minute hotel booking'.

Learn more with this Oxford Online English lesson: Hotel English
(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/hotel-english>).

A 'musical' is a play—or a film—which includes songs and dancing routines. Can you think of any other famous musicals?

A 'matinee' is a performance which starts earlier in the day, usually in the afternoon. You can also use the word 'matinee' to talk about films at the cinema.

A typical theatre has two types of seating: 'stalls' and 'circle'. The stalls are the seats in front of the stage, and at the same level. The circle is higher and further back, so seats in the circle tend to be cheaper.

Now, you've been on a tour of London all day, and you're feeling tired. It's time to talk about transport (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/talk-about-transport-and-driving>). Let's jump in a taxi and go back to your hotel.

4. Taking a Taxi

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/taxi.webp>)

Olivier: Where to?

Gina: Excuse me?

O: Where are you going?

G: Oh, sorry. Trafalgar Square, please. Do you know how much it will be?

O: It's all on the meter, but should be around £25.

G: OK, that's fine. How's your day going?

O: Typical Saturday, innit? Very busy, but can't complain. Are you just here visiting?

G: Yes, I'm from the US. Are you from London originally?

O: Yep. Proper Londoner. Born and bred here.

G: So, you like it here?

O: It's a blinding place to live.

G: Oh, right.

O: Obviously there a few places that are a little dodgy, but I think you get that in any big city.

G: Of course.

O: I mean, it just does my nut when people talk about how dangerous London has become.

G: Well... Yes...

O: I mean you've got to say the old bill do a good job around here.

G: The old who?

O: The old bill. That's what we call the police here.

G: Ah... actually could you drop me off here? I'd like to walk down The Mall.

O: Yeah, no problem. That's 25 quid please.

If you didn't understand all of that, don't worry. We included some colloquial words and phrases that are typical in London, and you might hear when you go on a tour of London in English.

innit

blinding

dodgy

does my nut

old bill

quid

Have you heard any of these before? 'Innit' is used instead of question tags like 'are you?' or 'doesn't it?' For example, instead of 'The weather looks nice, doesn't it?' you might hear 'The weather looks nice, innit?' This is colloquial, and as an English learner you probably shouldn't use it, but you might hear it in the UK.

'Blinding' is a slang word which means 'very good'. On the other hand, something which is 'dodgy' is not good at all.

'Dodgy' means that something is wrong. If you describe a person as dodgy, you mean that this person shouldn't be trusted. If you talk about a dodgy area of a city, you're talking about an area which isn't always safe to walk around.

If something 'does your nut', it annoys you. For example, you could say 'This music really does my nut.' Again, this is very colloquial! Use it for fun if you want, but expect people to give you some strange looks. The 'old bill', as you heard, are the police. This is London-specific slang.

Finally, 'quid (<http://www.differencebetween.net/language/difference-between-pound-and-quid/>)' is another word for 'pounds'. This is common, and you'll probably hear it if you visit the UK. So, if something costs ten pounds, you can say that it costs ten quid instead. 'Quid' is too colloquial to use in writing; also, 'quid' doesn't change in the plural: one quid, two quid, three quid...

Anyway, we hope you feel ready for a trip so you can take a tour of London in English! Do you have any recommendations for things to do in London? Please share your ideas in the comments! Thanks for watching!