

London

London is the capital and largest city of both England and the United Kingdom, with a population of around 8.8 million, and its metropolitan area is the largest in Western Europe, with a population of 14.9 million. It stands on the River Thames in south-east England at the head of a 50-mile (80 km) estuary down to the North Sea and has been a major settlement for nearly two millennia. The City of London, its ancient core and financial centre, was founded by the Romans as Londinium and retains its medieval boundaries. The City of Westminster, to the west of the City of London, has for centuries hosted the national government and parliament. In the 19th century, London grew rapidly, becoming the world's largest city at the time, as it expanded and absorbed the surrounding county of Middlesex, and parts of Surrey and Kent. In 1965 it was combined with parts of Essex and Hertfordshire to create the administrative area of Greater London, which is governed by 33 local authorities and the Greater London Authority.

As one of the world's major global cities, London exerts a strong influence on world art, entertainment, fashion, commerce and finance, education, health care, media, science and technology, tourism, transport, and communications. Despite a post-Brexit exodus of stock listings from the London Stock Exchange, London is still Europe's most economically powerful city, and it remains one of the major financial centres in the world. With Europe's largest concentration of higher education institutions, it is home to some of the highest-ranked academic institutions in the world?Imperial College London in natural and applied sciences, the London School of Economics in social sciences, and the comprehensive University College London. London is the most visited city in Europe and has the busiest city airport system in the world. The London Underground is the oldest rapid transit system in the world.

London's diverse cultures encompass over 300 languages. The 2023 population of Greater London of just under 10 million made it Europe's third-most populous city, accounting for 13.4% of the population of the United Kingdom and over 16% of the population of England. The Greater London

Built-up Area is the fourth-most populous in Europe, with about 9.8 million inhabitants at the 2011 census. The London metropolitan area is the third-most populous in Europe, with about 14 million inhabitants in 2016, granting London the status of a megacity.

London has four World Heritage Sites: the Tower of London; Kew Gardens; the combined Palace of Westminster, Westminster Abbey, and St Margaret's Church; and the historic settlement in Greenwich, where the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, defines the prime meridian (0° longitude) and Greenwich Mean Time. Other landmarks include Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, Piccadilly Circus, St Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge, and Trafalgar Square. London has many museums, galleries, libraries, and cultural venues, including the British Museum, National Gallery, Natural History Museum, Tate Modern, British Library, and numerous West End theatres. Important sporting events held in London include the FA Cup Final, the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, and the London Marathon. In 2012, London became the first city to host three Summer Olympic Games.

== Toponymy ==

London is an ancient name, attested in the first century AD, usually in the Latinised form Londinium. Modern scientific analyses of the name must account for the origins of the different forms found in early sources: Latin (usually Londinium), Old English (usually Lunden), and Welsh (usually Llundain), with reference to the known developments over time of sounds in those different languages. It is agreed that the name came into these languages from Common Brythonic; recent work tends to reconstruct the lost Celtic form of the name as *Londonjon or something similar. This was adapted into Latin as Londinium and borrowed into Old English.

Until 1889, the name "London" applied officially only to the City of London, but since then it has also referred to the County of London and to Greater London.

== History ==

=== Prehistory ===

In 1993, remains of a Bronze Age bridge were found on the south foreshore upstream from Vauxhall Bridge. Two of the timbers were radiocarbon dated to 1750?1285 BC. In 2010, foundations of a large timber structure, dated to 4800?4500 BC, were found on the Thames's south foreshore downstream from Vauxhall Bridge. Both structures are on the south bank of the Thames, where the now-underground River Effra flows into the Thames.

=== Roman London ===

Despite the evidence of scattered Brythonic settlements in the area, the first major settlement was founded by the Romans around 47 AD, about four years after their invasion of 43 AD. This only lasted until about 61 AD, when the Iceni tribe led by Queen Boudica stormed it and burnt it to the ground.

The next planned incarnation of Londinium prospered, superseding Colchester as the principal city of the Roman province of Britannia in 100. At its height in the 2nd century, Roman London had a population of about 60,000.

=== Anglo-Saxon and Viking-period London ===

With the early 5th-century collapse of Roman rule, the walled city of Londinium was effectively

abandoned, although Roman civilisation continued around St Martin-in-the-Fields until about 450. From about 500, an Anglo-Saxon settlement known as Lundenwic developed slightly west of the old Roman city. By about 680 the city had become a major port again, but there is little evidence of large-scale production. From the 820s repeated Viking assaults brought decline. Three are recorded; those in 851 and 886 succeeded, while the last, in 994, was rebuffed.

The Vikings applied Danelaw over much of eastern and northern England, its boundary running roughly from London to Chester as an area of political and geographical control imposed by the Viking incursions formally agreed by the Danish warlord, Guthrum and the West Saxon king Alfred the Great in 886. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Alfred "refounded" London in 886. Archaeological research shows this involved abandonment of Lundenwic and a revival of life and trade within the old Roman walls. London then grew slowly until a dramatic increase in about 950.

By the 11th century, London was clearly the largest town in England. Westminster Abbey, rebuilt in Romanesque style by King Edward the Confessor, was one of the grandest churches in Europe. Winchester had been the capital of Anglo-Saxon England, but from this time London became the main forum for foreign traders and the base for defence in time of war. In the view of Frank Stenton: "It had the resources, and it was rapidly developing the dignity and the political self-consciousness appropriate to a national capital."

=== Middle Ages ===

After winning the Battle of Hastings, William, Duke of Normandy was crowned King of England in newly completed Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066. William built the Tower of London, the first of many such in England rebuilt in stone in the south-eastern corner of the city, to intimidate the inhabitants. In 1097, William II began building Westminster Hall, close by the abbey of the same name. It became the basis of a new Palace of Westminster.

In the 12th century, the institutions of central government, which had hitherto followed the royal English court around the country, grew in size and sophistication and became increasingly fixed, for most purposes at Westminster, although the royal treasury came to rest in the Tower. While the City of Westminster developed into a true governmental capital, its distinct neighbour, the City of London, remained England's largest city and principal commercial centre and flourished under its own unique administration, the Corporation of London. In 1100, its population was some 18,000; by 1300 it had grown to nearly 100,000. With the Black Death in the mid-14th century, London lost nearly a third of its population. London was the focus of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.

London was a centre of England's Jewish population before their expulsion by Edward I in 1290. Violence against Jews occurred in 1190, when it was rumoured that the new king had ordered their massacre after they had presented themselves at his coronation. In 1264 during the Second Barons' War, Simon de Montfort's rebels killed 500 Jews while attempting to seize records of debts.

=== Early modern ===

During the Tudor period, the Reformation produced a gradual shift to Protestantism. Much of London property passed from church to private ownership, which accelerated trade and business in the city. In 1475, the Hanseatic League set up a main trading base (kontor) of England in London, called the Stalhof or Steelyard. It remained until 1853, when the Hanseatic cities of Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg sold the property to South Eastern Railway. Woollen cloth was shipped undyed and undressed from 14th/15th century London to the nearby shores of the Low Countries.

Yet English maritime enterprise hardly reached beyond the seas of north-west Europe. The commercial route to Italy and the Mediterranean was normally through Antwerp and over the Alps; any ships passing through the Strait of Gibraltar to or from England were likely to be Italian or Ragusan. The reopening of the Netherlands to English shipping in January 1565 spurred a burst of

commercial activity. The Royal Exchange was founded. Mercantilism grew and monopoly traders such as the East India Company were founded as trade expanded to the New World. London became the main North Sea port, with migrants arriving from England and abroad. The population rose from about 50,000 in 1530 to about 225,000 in 1605.

In the 16th century, William Shakespeare and his contemporaries lived in London during English Renaissance theatre. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre was constructed in 1599 in Southwark. Stage performances came to a halt in London w