

## London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom, its economic, political and cultural center. It is one of the world's most important ports and one of the largest cities in the world. London with its suburbs has a population of about 11 million people.

London has been a capital for nearly a thousand years. Many of its ancient buildings still stand. The most famous of them are the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Most visitors also want to see the Houses of Parliament and the many magnificent museums.

Once London was a small Roman town of the north bank of the Thames. Slowly it grew into one of the world's major cities.

Different areas of London seem like different cities. The West End is a rich man's world of shops, offices and theatres. The City of London is the district where most offices and banks are concentrated; the Royal Exchange and the Bank of England are here, too. The East End is a district where mostly working people live. The old port area is now called "Docklands". There are now new office buildings in Docklands, and thousands of new flats and houses.

By the day the whole of London is busy. At night, offices are quiet and empty, but the West End stays alive, because this is where Londoners come to enjoy themselves. There are two opera houses here, several concert halls and many theatres, as well as cinemas. In nearby Soho the pubs and restaurants and nightclubs are busy half the night.