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London



London is one of the largest cities in the world. More than 10 million people live in London and its suburbs. London is a city of striking contrasts. Here one can come across the past and the present, the old and the modern, live side by side in mutual tolerance and respect.

In London, one can see architecture of different centuries and styles. It is inseparably connected with the history of the city. The Romans, the Saxons and the Danes settled here in turn, after them came the Normans, and brought the French civilisation. London survived the Plague and the Great Fire, which followed in 1666. During the Fire all wooden houses were smashed to the ground and a New London, London of stone with bigger houses and wider streets was built. During the World War II, many buildings of great historic value lay in ruins and today the face of London is changed.

Traditionally London is divided into several parts: the City, Westminster, the West End and the East End.

The city first started in the place, which is known as the City. It is the Heart of London, its commercial and business centre. It occupies a territory of a square mile. During a day, it is full of people, nearly half a million people work there.



The West End is the richest part of the city with its beautiful avenues, parks and gardens, grandhotels, theatres and fashionable shops. It is a symbol of wealth and luxury.

While the City is the money of London and the West End is the good of London, the East End is the hands of London, that built the banks of the City and beautiful mansions and hotels of the West End. It is a district, inhabited by the workers. There are many factories and the Port of London there.

As for me, I cannot imagine London without Thames. In fact, painters and writers regard the river as the source of inspiration. Turner, Monet, Canatello painted it countless times and their impression of the river in all seasons can be seen on the walls of museums, throughout the world. Pope, Spensor and many other poets sang it in their poems. The most famous books about the Thames are 'Three men in a boat' by Jerome-k-Jerome and 'The wind in the willows' by K. Graham. If there had been no Thames, there would be no London. It was born many centuries ago in the place, which is known as the City. The City is not only the centre of business. It's the burth place



of London. London was born in the place not far from St. Paul's cathedral hundreds of years before our era. It was called Lynn-din (the lonely port) at that time. After the Norman Conquest, it became Londinium.

If you want to get some glimpses of London, you'd better start sightseeing with the Tower of London, that comes first among the historic buildings of the city. It was built as the fortress after the Norman invasion of England in 1066. It has been used as the Royal Palace, as an observatory, an arsenal and a prison. For many visitors the principal attraction is the Crown Jewels, the finest precious stones of the nation.

A twenty minutes' walk from the Tower will take you to another historic building – St. Paul's Cathedral, the greatest of English churches. It was built by a famous English architect Sir Christopher Wren. St. Paul's Cathedral, with its famous Whispering Gallery, is considered to be a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture. In one of its towers hangs one of the largest bells in the world – Great Paul.

Not far from Cathedral is Westminster Abbey. It was founded by Edward the Confessor in 1050. The best part of the Abbey is a wonderful chapel, dating back to the 16th century. It is famous for its magnificent architecture. There are many monuments and statues there. Many English kings and queens are buried there. Since William the 1st, almost ever monarch has been crowned in this great church. One of the greatest treasures of the Abbey is oaken Coronation Chair made in 1300. On the south side of Westminster Abbey is Poet's Corner, where the greatest English writers are buried. Here also are memorials to Shakespeare, Burns, Byron, Scott and so on.



Across the road from Westminster Abbey is Westminster Palace, which is spread magnificently on the north bank of the Thames. It is a remarkable example of Gothic architecture.

London sight seeing tour?

There are a lot of places of interest in London. Among them are: Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, London Bridge, the Tower of London.

London stands on the river Thames. Crossing the river by the Tower Bridge you can see the Tower of London. It is one of the oldest buildings of the city. Many centuries ago it was a fortress, a royal palace and then a prison. Now it is a museum of arms.



On the bank of the Thames, not far from the Tower of London, you can see Westminster Palace, or the Houses of Parliament. It is the seat of the British government and it is one of the most beautiful buildings in London. In one of its towers there is the famous Big Ben, the largest clock of England. It strikes every quarter of an hour.



Buckingham Palace is the Queen's official London residence. Tourists always go to see the ceremony of changing the Guard there.

London has many fine squares. Some of them are quiet, others are busy like Trafalgar Square. Trafalgar Square is the central square of the city. To the right of the square there is the National Gallery which has a fine collection of European paintings.

St. Paul's Cathedral is the biggest English church. Another famous church is Westminster Abbey where kings, queens, and many famous people are buried.



London is also famous for its beautiful parks. Hyde Park is the most democratic park in the world, as anyone can say anything he likes there. Regent's Park is the home of London Zoo.

I'd like to see it all myself.

History of London.

Numerous finds prove that the area around London was inhabited by the Celts from 800 BC onwards. The earliest prehistoric settlers in the London area lived along parts of the Thames valley. Some of their flint tools have been found in river graver. All the time it was mostly wild-forested countryside.

In later prehistoric times the settlers became more organized. They lived in villages of huts made of timber, branches & clay. They hunted, fished & farmed.

Following Caesar's initial landing in Britain in 55 BC, the Emperor Claudius conquered the southeast of Britain & founded the military camp of Londinium on a strategic ford across the Thames. The camp rapidly developed into a flourishing port & trading post. The area of about 1 square mile,



which the Romans fortified with a massive rampart, corresponds approximately to today's City of London.

They built a bridge over the Thames & there has been a «London Bridge» in the same area ever since.

Roman Londinium grew up on the northern side of the bridge. Products such as olive oil & wine were brought by ships from different parts of the Roman Empire & unloaded into wooden quays along the river.

Londinium was surrounded with a wall of stone & brick which lasted for many centuries.

Inside the Roman wall low houses were built with bright red tiled roofs. There were probably temples, bathhouses, shops & market stalls there. Around AD 61, the Romans faced an uprising of Boadicea, the warlike Queen of East Anglia, who even succeeded in capturing London. From about 240 onwards, London was the capital of one of the four provinces of Britain under the Emperor Diocletian. The Tower of London

The History of the tower of London

Fortress, Place and Prison



This short history of the Tower of London charts the different stages of its development. Throughout its history, the Tower has attracted a number of important functions and its role as armoury, royal palace, prison and fortress is explained, as well as its modern role as tourist attraction and home to a thriving community.



The development of the Tower

The Tower of London was begun in the reign of William the Conqueror (1066-1087) and remained unchanged for over a century. Then, between 1190 and 1285, the White Tower was encircled by two towered curtain walls and a great moat. The only important enlargement of the Tower after that time was the building of the Wharf in the 14th century. Today the medieval defences remain relatively unchanged.