

LONDON

POST-LOCKDOWN


A Secret Bucket List 



Welcome to your social distance-friendly guide to London during these strange times! 🤒

If you're feeling uncertain of what to do once our towns and cities start to gradually re-open, that's what we're here for. If you need a new slogan to update #StayatHome, you can borrow our: *Don't be a Tourist* (in your own city). Be a seeker of stories and collector of local secrets instead.

For the urban creature, cities are our new oyster. It's time to prowl unfamiliar neighbourhoods like a roaming detective, look up and admire hidden architectural details, seek out the Mom & Pop shops that need our support, follow street art trails and discover secret viewpoints. And while returning to "normal" may still seem a long way off for us all, let's not write off 2020 so easily. Adventure awaits!

 Print out this bucket list or keep it bookmarked. Locations are linked with more practical information. We will keep updating this guide as restrictions ease and more of the city's public spaces become safe to re-open. It goes without saying that we advise social distancing, staying alert, wearing a mask and travelling with hand-sanitizer. Bear in mind opening hours may vary for businesses that have been able to re-open, so always best to call ahead if you can. Stay safe and alert!

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We will continue to update this guide, particularly as London's non-essential businesses get the green light to re-open.

LONDON: YOUR OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

- Embark on a quest to track down the network of [London's forgotten pedaways](#).
- Visit London's [Victorian Dinosaur Park](#), a peculiar attraction that survived national ridicule after they were unveiled in 1854, before the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. They were the first dinosaur sculptures in the world, now "Grade I Listed Buildings"; holding the same status as St Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace.
- Try your hand at [mudlarking on the Thames](#). You never know what you might find.
- Imagine yourself whispering away with Jane Austen's *Emma*, while strolling past the wild flowers and regal fountain at [The Rookery Gardens](#).
- Philpot Lane is home to [London's smallest public statue](#), two little mice eating cheese. The little critters commemorate two workmen who tragically fell to their death from their scaffolding after fighting over a missing sandwich. As the story goes, it was nicked by mice.
- Go on a hunt for the [dragons of London](#).
- [Take a stroll down London's lost canal](#) till you meet friendly deer at Clissold Park.
- Pay tribute to the forgotten souls of London's women of the night at the curious [Crossbones Graveyard](#).
- If you've found yourself with a case of writer's block, [Postman's Park](#) is the perfect cure, where there are dozens of plaques describing the extraordinary stories of the ordinary man.
- Did you know that Texas was once an independent sovereign country? The president of Texas at the time established its own [embassy in London](#) in a building that was formerly a brothel, a gambling den, and an escape for Napoleon III (today, it's a [wonderful wine merchant](#)). Tucked away in an old passageway, you can find a [curious plaque erected by the Anglo-Texan society closeby](#).
- Go [nose spotting](#) (if you're feeling noseey...)

Discover one of the most cinematic streets in East London, peppered with original houses that were built for French Huguenot families escaping Catholic persecution in France in the early 1700s. [Princelet Street](#) is like stepping into a time warp of 18th century yellow brick Georgian gems with faded shutters.

Find a magical lost world tucked away amidst the skyscrapers of London's financial hub; an abandoned church converted into a secret garden that has come to symbolize the city's struggle and resilience. [St Dunstan-in-the-East](#) is an unexpected gem, dating back to 1100, damaged beyond repair during the London Blitz, it lay as a wreck until the 1960s, when the City of London council decided to transform the ruins into an urban oasis.

Track down [London's WWII Stretcher Fences](#) hiding in plain sight along quaint London streets in Peckham or Brixton; take a stroll by Deptford, Oval, or East London, and look for the metal fences that were cleverly repurposed after the war from the stretcher beds that carried the wounded.

Brixton is its own open air gallery full of [colourful murals](#) definitely worth visiting.

Take a breather from the crowds in Camden and seek out the colourful crescent of candy houses on [Kelly Street](#).

Seek out nature's nook in the busy West End, the [Phoenix Garden](#) has a history as wild as its ecology. The community garden was once a WW2 bombsite, a pub and lastly a car park in the 1980s.

Find the overlooked [Hyde Park Pet Cemetery](#). There's something about those miniature tombstones in a humble graveyard where the pure love given by pets is honoured with such unabashed sincerity.

Discover a time capsule of 19th century London at the [Roupell Street Conservation Area](#), which is made up of terraced houses that have been left just as they were in the 1820s. It's quite the cinematic stroll.

Spend a day at the [Strawberry Hill House garden](#) which is blooming with flowers. The wonderfully white gothic castle looks like it's been taken out of an old Cinderella story book.

Take your date on a socially distanced rendez-vous at the fairytale setting which is the [Hampstead Heath Pergola](#).

FOOD TO GO

Organise an Italian-themed night in with the help of one of [Passione Vino](#)'s "wine survival kits & aperitivo packs" curated by the eccentric and knowledgeable Luca Dusi and his team.

Support small (make it tiny) businesses and order a delicious and hearty salad box from a company that usually sets up shop [inside of London's iconic red telephone boxes](#). Soon enough, you'll be able to pick up your lunch in person from the phone boxes. A novelty lunch indeed.

Support [the oldest pie and mash shop in London](#) with an order of cosy, classic, comfort food.

Pay a visit to [Fitzrovia's Old Dairy](#), which has kept its facade and interiors entirely intact. Today it's an unfussy café, where you'll be able to pick up great coffee, cakes and quiches to go.

Tucked away in a courtyard in East London, [Lily Vanilli](#) is a charming little bakery with vintage styling, rustic touches and a faithful clientele that will cross the city for these divine cakes and cupcakes. While we wait for the weekend café to re-open, the bakery is still accepting orders.

The [Biscuiteers](#) have DIY icing kits for you to start your next hobby in lockdown, or if you find your talents gear more towards the tasting part, you can order their own hand decorated biscuits that are almost too pretty to eat.

Bring the ol' chippy home with [The Fryer's Delight](#) who are open for takeaway and delivery.

Try one of [Beigel Bake](#)'s heart-warming traditional Jewish-style bagels filled with deliciousness.

For your sourdough fix, put an order in at [Italo](#) or [E5 Bakehouse](#).

FAKE A VACATION

- Did you know there's a [beach at the end of the Picadilly line](#)?

- If you can't make it to the Cotswolds for a weekend in the English countryside, [Hampstead](#) is the next best thing. Start off where Holly Walk meets Church Row. Head up the slope, walking alongside an enchanting historic graveyard lost in time on your right, where the tombstones are being swallowed by nature and sinking into the earth. You'll find a gate entry a little ways up the street. It feels just like the secret garden but with ghosts. Next up, head to The Mount, keeping a keen eye out for a particularly charming enclave of cottages at number 12 (look for the white house with blue shutters). Disappearing again into the quiet streets, go on the hunt for Mansfield Place, London's secret tiny village that feels like stepping through a portal into a peaceful countryside hamlet. Those cottages behind their picket fences, with ample grassy lawns and charmingly decorated porches are just about the most enviable homes you'll find in the city.

- Find some much needed respite in the [Kyoto Garden](#), a slice of Japanese Zen hidden away in Holland Park.

- Escape to [Eel Pie Island](#), the tiny island on the Thames that once held The Rolling Stones, David Bowie, and the UK's largest hippie commune.

- Take a walk through [an ancient forest](#).

- Pay a visit to the [pelicans at St James park](#) and introduce yourself to Isla and Tiffany, or Moon and Star, who like to take it easy by the lake.

Wherever you are, if you'd like any advice from the MNC team, please get in touch with your Keyholder concierge anytime: concierge@messynessychic.com

Stay curious!