

OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

The London Eye

London · From 33.52€

https://londoneye.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Temporary Wheel to Permanent Icon

GOOGLE **4.5** ★★★★☆ 201 040 {pdf_label(lang, 'reviews')}

TIQETS **4.5** ★★★★☆ 1 671 {pdf_label(lang, 'reviews')}

The London Eye was originally conceived as a temporary structure to celebrate the turn of the millennium, designed by architects **David Marks** and **Julia Barfield**. Initially named the Millennium Wheel, it was intended to stand for only two years but quickly became an indispensable part of the city's skyline. Its construction was a daring engineering feat, assembled horizontally on barges in the Thames before being hoisted vertically. This complex process required immense precision, as engineers initially underestimated the force needed, causing cables to snap during the first attempt.

The wheel's journey to permanence was driven by its overwhelming popularity. By July 2002, it had already welcomed **8.5 million visitors**, a figure that convinced the Lambeth Council to grant it permanent status despite the economic climate. This decision transformed a fleeting celebration into a lasting icon of modern London. The structure's success also led to various sponsorship deals, changing its name from British Airways London Eye to EDF Energy and later Coca-Cola, before settling back on the simple, iconic **London Eye** in 2020.

Beyond its commercial evolution, the Eye holds a central place in London's cultural calendar. Since January 1, 2005, it has served as the focal point for the capital's **New Year's Eve fireworks**. The ten-minute countdown projected onto the wheel creates a shared moment of anticipation for millions watching from the riverbanks and across the city. This tradition has cemented the Eye not just as a tourist attraction, but as a symbol of unity and celebration for Londoners and visitors alike.

Designed with 32 capsules, each representing one of the **London boroughs**, the wheel is a tribute to the city's diversity. Interestingly, the capsules are numbered from 1 to 33, omitting the number 13 due to superstition. Each capsule weighs 10 tons and is climate-controlled, ensuring comfort regardless of the weather outside. The design, which won a **Thea Award** for its innovation, reflects a vision that transformed a temporary engineering challenge into a permanent architectural masterpiece, distinguishing itself with a minimalist yet powerful aesthetic.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the capsule, you are immediately enveloped by a sense of calm detachment from the bustling city below. The air-conditioned interior offers a stark contrast to the often unpredictable London weather, creating a serene environment for contemplation. As the wheel begins its slow, silent ascent, the perspective shifts dramatically. The chaotic streets of Westminster dissolve into a **geographical tapestry**, revealing the intricate relationship between the Thames and the historic landmarks that define the capital. You are not just looking at London; you are understanding its layout from a bird's-eye view.

The true magic unfolds as the capsule reaches its peak height of **135 meters**. Here, the city seems to pause, allowing you to trace the river's path towards Tower Bridge or gaze directly at the Palace of Westminster. The transparency of the windows frames the city like a living painting, where the golden hues of afternoon light or the electric glow of evening lights paint the skyline. This panoramic immersion transforms a simple ride into a profound architectural and historical lesson, offering a unique vantage point that few other attractions can match.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

London, SE1 7PB · Metro: Waterloo (Jubilee, Northern Line, Bakerloo, Waterloo & City) or Embankment (District, Circle, Northern Line). Exit towards the South Ba

OPENING HOURS

Open every day. Hours vary by season: later closing in summer (until 11:30 PM) and earlier in winter (6:30 PM). Check available time slots.

PRICES

Children under 2 years free (ticket required). {promo}.

VISIT DURATION

A full rotation takes about 30 minutes. Allow a total of one hour to include queues, security checks, and boarding/disembarking.

PHOTOS

Photos are allowed and encouraged. The windows are transparent but may create reflections. Bring a black cloth or hat to cover them when taking pictures.

AUDIENCE

Suitable for all ages. Children aged 4 to 15 have reduced rates. The capsules are air-conditioned and accessible to wheelchairs.

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve The London Eye ?



📍 Riverside Building, County Hall — SE1 7PB London

🌐 51°30.191′ N, 0°7.171′ O



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Ride and Facilities

Ground Level (Ticketing & Security)

Upon arrival at Riverside Building, County Hall, visitors pass through strict security checks similar to airport procedures. The ticketing area is modern and efficient, displaying digital boards for time slots. Here, you can also purchase combined tickets for the SEA LIFE Aquarium or upgrade to Fast Track if available. The atmosphere is bustling but organized, setting the tone for a premium experience.

The Capsule (The Ride)

The heart of the experience is the enclosed capsule, which holds up to 25 people. It features floor-to-ceiling glass windows providing 360-degree views. The interior is spacious, allowing guests to move freely, and is equipped with climate control for year-round comfort. The slow rotation ensures a stable platform for photography and observation without the sensation of motion sickness.

Peak Height (135 Meters)

At the apex of the rotation, the capsule offers the most expansive view of London. This 'level' is not a physical floor but a moment in the ride where landmarks like St. Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge, and the Shard are clearly visible. It is the ideal moment to take panoramic photos or simply absorb the scale of the city. The view extends up to 40 kilometers on a clear day.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

Full access to capsules for wheelchairs, with boarding assistance.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Free tickets for children under 2 (ticket required), discounted rates for ages 4-15.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Views and Architectural Wonders

01 Evening Rotation

The Sunset Slot

Booking the sunset slot is the **ultimate experience** at the London Eye. As the sun dips below the horizon, the city transitions from golden hour to twilight, illuminating landmarks like Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament. This timing allows you to witness the city lighting up, creating a magical atmosphere that is perfect for photography and romantic moments.

> 💡 This slot is the most expensive and in-demand, often selling out weeks in advance. **Plan ahead** to secure your spot for this breathtaking view.

02 West-facing Capsule

View of Big Ben and Parliament

Directly opposite the London Eye stands the **Palace of Westminster**. From the capsule, you get an unobstructed, close-up view of Big Ben and the Gothic architecture of Parliament. This perspective highlights the symmetry of the riverfront and offers a unique angle rarely seen from ground level, emphasizing the political heart of the UK.

> 💡 The proximity allows you to see the intricate details of the clock face and the Victoria Tower, which are often lost in the crowd from the bridge.

03 River View

The Thames Panorama

The river Thames acts as a **spine for the city**, and from the Eye, you can trace its journey through London. You can spot Tower Bridge in the distance and see the bustling river traffic. This view provides context to London's history as a trading port and how the river has shaped the city's development over centuries.

> 💡 On clear days, the view extends to the horizon, revealing the vastness of the London basin and the surrounding counties.

04

Premium Capsule

Afternoon Tea Experience

For a luxurious twist, the **Afternoon Tea** option allows you to enjoy traditional British treats while soaring above the city. Served in a private capsule, this experience includes champagne, sandwiches, and pastries. It is a perfect blend of culinary delight and architectural awe, ideal for special occasions or a refined visit.

> 💡 This experience requires booking weeks in advance due to limited availability and high demand among tourists and locals alike.

05

Capsule Design

The 32 Boroughs

Each of the 32 capsules represents one of the **London boroughs**, symbolizing the city's diversity. While the capsules are identical in structure, this conceptual design adds a layer of meaning to the ride. It serves as a reminder that London is a collection of distinct communities united by the river and the city's history.

> 💡 Interestingly, the capsules are numbered 1 to 33, skipping 13 due to superstition, a quirky detail that adds to the wheel's lore.

06

Annual Event

New Year's Fireworks

Although not a daily feature, the **New Year's Eve fireworks** launched from the Eye are a legendary event. The wheel serves as the countdown clock, projecting a ten-minute timer onto its structure. This spectacle draws millions of viewers and has become a defining moment of London's annual calendar, showcasing the city's capacity for celebration.

> 💡 The fireworks are synchronized with music and lights, creating a multi-sensory experience that is broadcast globally.

07

East-facing Capsule

The Shard View

Looking east, you can see the **Shard**, London's tallest building, piercing the skyline. This view contrasts the modern architectural marvel with the historic landmarks like St. Paul's Cathedral. It highlights the dynamic evolution of London's skyline, where old and new coexist in a striking visual dialogue.

> 💡 The Shard's glass facade reflects the sky, often blending with the clouds and creating an illusion of floating height.

08

Ground View

Jubilee Gardens Perspective

Before boarding, the **Jubilee Gardens** offer the best photo opportunity of the London Eye itself. The green space provides a framed view of the wheel against the backdrop of Parliament. It is a peaceful spot to relax and appreciate the engineering feat from the ground before ascending into the sky.

> 💡 This garden was created specifically to enhance the visual impact of the Eye and provide a public space for visitors.

TIPS

Essential Tips for a Smooth Visit

TIMING

Book the sunset slot for the best lighting and atmosphere, but arrive early to avoid long queues. If you prefer fewer crowds, visit on a weekday morning.

BILLET

Purchase tickets online in advance to secure your time slot and potentially save money. Consider the Fast Track ticket if you are running late or want to skip the main queue.

PARCOURS

Allow one hour for the entire experience, including security checks and boarding. The rotation takes 30 minutes, so plan your arrival accordingly.

PHOTO

Bring a black cloth or hat to cover the window glass when taking photos. This simple trick eliminates reflections and ensures sharp images of the landmarks.

PAUSE

Combine your visit with a meal at Borough Market or a drink at the Southbank Centre. These locations are within walking distance and offer great local flavor.

ENFANTS

Children under 2 are free but require a ticket. Ensure you book their slots online. The capsules are spacious and safe for young children, making it a family-friendly activity.

AUDIOGUIDE

The audio guide is available in multiple languages and provides historical context. It is worth using if you want to learn about the landmarks as you pass them.

CONFORT

Dress in layers as the capsules are air-conditioned. Wear comfortable shoes for walking around the South Bank before and after the ride.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

How does the time slot system work at the London Eye?

Your ticket is valid only for the chosen time. You must join the queue (standard or Fast Track) during this slot. Some tolerance often exists, but arriving too early may result in denied entry. Check your confirmation em

What is the difference between a Standard ticket and a Fast Track ticket?

The Standard ticket places you in the main queue, which can be long during peak season. Fast Track allows you to skip this queue and go directly to security. Both use the same strict time slot system. Book in advance to

Can I cancel or modify my ticket?

Yes, most tickets allow modification or cancellation under certain conditions. Log in to your customer account on the official website to change your time slot. Refunds are often subject to fees or specific deadlines.

Is it possible to buy tickets on site?

It is strongly advised not to wait until the day of. Tickets are often sold out, especially in summer and on weekends. Book online to guarantee your place and sometimes benefit from preferential rates compared to the tic

How long does one rotation of the London Eye take?

One full rotation takes approximately 30 minutes. The wheel moves very slowly, allowing for a stable view. The total visit time includes queues and security checks; allow one hour on site.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Horizontal Construction

The London Eye was built **horizontally on the river** before being lifted vertically. This innovative method allowed for easier assembly but required immense engineering precision. The first attempt to lift it failed due to underestimated forces, leading to cable breaks and a redesign of the lifting strategy.

Missing Number 13

Despite having 32 capsules, they are numbered from 1 to 33, **omitting the number 13**. This superstition-driven decision reflects a cultural quirk in design, ensuring no capsule bears the unlucky number. It is a small detail that adds character to the wheel's lore.

Permanent Status

Originally planned as a temporary structure, the Eye became **permanent due to its popularity**. By 2002, it had attracted 8.5 million visitors, convincing the Lambeth Council to keep it. This decision transformed a millennium celebration into a lasting icon of London.

Sponsorship History

The wheel has changed names multiple times due to **corporate sponsorships**, including British Airways, EDF Energy, and Coca-Cola. It reverted to simply 'London Eye' in 2020, shedding the commercial branding to focus on its identity as a city landmark.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

The area surrounding the London Eye is a cultural hotspot on the South Bank. Just across the Lambeth Bridge lies the **Palace of Westminster**, offering a direct view of Big Ben and Parliament. For a change of pace, the adjacent **SEA LIFE London Aquarium** provides an underwater contrast to the aerial views, making a combined ticket a smart choice. Food lovers should head to **Borough Market**, London's oldest market, for a gourmet lunch featuring artisanal cheeses and fresh produce. Finally, the **Jubilee Gardens** behind the Eye offer a peaceful green space, perfect for capturing the iconic photo of the wheel with Parliament in the background.



Visiting the London Eye is more than a sightseeing activity; it is a moment of clarity amidst the urban sprawl. As you descend, the city returns to its vibrant chaos, but your perspective remains altered. You leave with a deeper appreciation for London's scale and history, carried by the memory of that **silent rotation** above the clouds. It is an experience that bridges the gap between observer and participant, leaving you with a lasting image of the city's enduring beauty and dynamic spirit.