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FREE GUIDE · LONDON

Tower of London

Crown Jewels, ravens, Beefeaters, Traitors' Gate... — the 7 must-see stops of the Tower of London, explained one by one



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Your visit at a glance

Fortress, palace, prison, arsenal, treasury and even a royal zoo: in almost a thousand years, the Tower of London has been all of them. Here the Crown Jewels are kept —still used at coronations—, ravens protected by legend patrol the grounds, and the Yeoman Warders guard a history of splendour and beheadings in equal measure. This tour brings together the seven must-see stops of the complex, explained one by one, with 1, 2 and 3-hour routes so you can choose according to the time you have. If you only visit one monument in London, make it this one.

At a glance

PRICE

~£37 adult · £18.50 child

TIME

2-3 h (all 7 stops)

UNDERGROUND

Tower Hill

HOURS

Tue-Sat 9-17:30 · Sun-Mon 10-17:30

STOPS

The 7 must-sees

DON'T MISS

The Crown Jewels



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With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.

Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

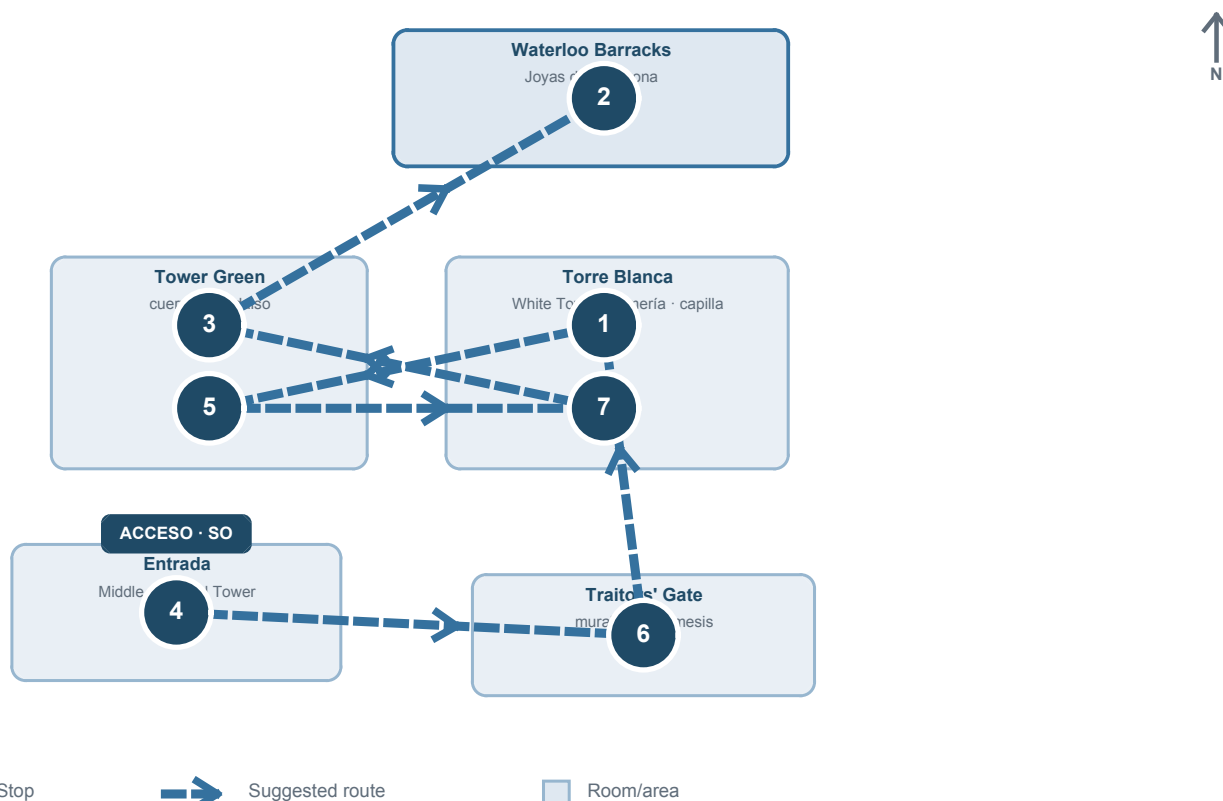
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The map and the route

You cross the outer wall and the first thing to greet you is the White Tower (1), the Norman heart of the complex: use it as your compass. Head up early to the Waterloo Barracks for the Crown Jewels (2), which is where the queue forms first. Walk round the White Tower to see its Royal Armouries and, on the way out, the site of the scaffold (7) on Tower Green, next to the chapels where the executed lie (5). Go down to the river to look out over Traitors' Gate (6), the gate through which the condemned entered. Along the way you'll come across the ravens (3) and the odd Beefeater (4) ready to tell you a grim story.

TORRE DE LONDRES · FORTALEZA CONCÉNTRICA (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)



La Torre Blanca ocupa el centro; las Joyas están al norte (Waterloo Barracks) y Traitors' Gate en la muralla sur, junto al río. Las capillas (5) y la armería/cadalso (7) se reparten entre torre y green. No a escala.

Visiting order: 1 White Tower (get your bearings) › 2 Crown Jewels in the Waterloo Barracks (go early, it's the longest queue) › 7 Royal Armouries and site of the scaffold › 5 Chapel of St John and St Peter ad Vincula › 6 Traitors' Gate by the river › and along the way, 3 the ravens and 4 a free tour with a Yeoman Warder.

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

2

The Crown Jewels

Waterloo Barracks, north wing · 30-45

Housed since 1994 in the Waterloo Barracks (a Victorian barracks of 1845), the Crown Jewels are the monarchy's living ceremonial treasure, still in use. They include the Imperial State Crown and the sceptre with the Cullinan I diamond. Photography is forbidden.



The Waterloo Barracks, the Victorian barracks that today holds the Crown Jewels (no photography inside).

Photo: Dietmar Rabich · CC BY-SA 4.0
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DON'T MISS THIS

Look for the Imperial State Crown and, on the sceptre, the enormous Cullinan I: they're the star pieces of the room.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

How many diamonds fit into a single crown? The exact figure for the most famous one in the world (and the record-breaking diamond the sceptre hides) awaits you in the full guide.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

3

The ravens and the legend

Tower Green and around the White Tower · 10-15

According to legend, if the ravens leave, the Tower and the kingdom will fall, a superstition linked to Charles II. There are always at least six resident ravens, each with a name and their own keeper, the Ravenmaster. The feathers on one wing are trimmed so they don't stray far.



One of the resident ravens: legend says that if they leave, the kingdom falls.

Photo: Colin · CC BY-SA 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



LOOK FOR THIS

Spot the ravens perched on the grass of Tower Green or beside the White Tower, and see whether they wear a coloured band on one leg.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

These birds have their own diet, an official biography... and even a human at their service with a title that sounds straight out of a novel. Who he is and what he does each day, in the full guide.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

4

The Yeoman Warders (Beefeaters)

Main entrance and general tour · 15-20

The Tower's ceremonial guard since the time of Henry VIII (around 1509), the Yeoman Warders live within the grounds and act as guides. Only veterans of the Armed Forces with long service are admitted. Their nickname 'Beefeaters' is of uncertain origin.



A Yeoman Warder or 'Beefeater', guardian and guide of the Tower for centuries.

Photo: Colin Smith · CC BY-SA 2.0 ·
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THE DETAIL

Notice the royal monogram embroidered on the chest of the uniform and look for the times of their free tours near the entrance.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

What does it take to wear this uniform? The bar is so high it's astonishing: the exact requirement (in years lived) and the possible origin of the nickname 'Beefeater', in the full guide.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

7

The Royal Armouries and the site of the scaffold

White Tower (armouries) and Tower Green (memorial) · 25-30

The White Tower houses the Royal Armouries with the 'line of kings' and the armour of Henry VIII. On Tower Green, a glass memorial marks the site of the scaffold for private executions. There died Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Lady Jane Grey.



Henry VIII's armour in the Royal Armouries; outside, the memorial marks the site of the scaffold.

Photo: Matt Brown · CC BY 4.0 · Wikimedia Commons



WHERE TO LOOK

Look for Henry VIII's imposing battle armour and, outside, the circular glass memorial on the grass of Tower Green.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

The full story of this stop (twice the text), its «ONE FACT» box and all 7 stops of the route, one by one.

Practical tips

Best times

Go first thing, right at opening (9:00 Tuesday to Saturday), and head straight for the Crown Jewels: it's where the queues form first. By mid-morning the grounds fill up with groups.

Buy your ticket in advance

Get your ticket online and ahead of time to skip the box office and secure your date, especially in high season and at weekends; it's usually a little cheaper than at the gate. Give yourself room, because you need at least 2-3 hours and the grounds are large. The Yeoman Warders' free tours are included, so don't pay extra for them.

Accessibility and services

Much of the grounds is cobbled and the towers have narrow, steep staircases, something to bear in mind for reduced mobility; there are accessible routes, adapted toilets and wheelchairs on loan, as well as a café, shops and cloakroom. Check the access conditions and the rates for visitors with disabilities and a companion on the official website before you go.

With children

Kids love the ravens, the armour and the Beefeaters telling gruesome stories. There are family activities and plenty of open-air space, though watch out for the narrow, steep staircases in the towers.

The Ceremony of the Keys

The Tower's nightly lock-up, the Ceremony of the Keys, has been held every night for centuries and is free, but it requires booking a ticket well in advance because the places fly. It takes place after dark, with the grounds closed to the public: a different experience if your trip allows it.

Combine it

You're right next to Tower Bridge: on the way out, cross the iconic bridge over the Thames (with its optional glass walkway) and make the most of the views of the Tower from the other side of the river. The two go together beautifully in half a day.

Practical info

Address: Tower of London, London EC3N 4AB (Tower Hill Underground). Guide prices 2026 (verified at hrp.org.uk, subject to change): adult around £37, child aged 5 to 15 around £18.50, under-5s free; it's usually a little cheaper booking online and in advance. Guide hours: Tuesday to Saturday 9:00 to 17:30 (last entry 17:00) and Sundays and Mondays 10:00 to 17:30. Closures: 24, 25 and 26 December and 1 January; hours may vary on public holidays and during events, so always confirm on the official website before you go.

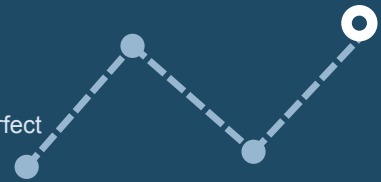
Official website: www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/

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Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Tower of London: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

- 1 The White Tower**
Centre of the inner ward · 30-40
- 5 The Chapel of St John and St Peter ad Vincula**
Inside the White Tower and Tower Green · 15-20
- 6 Traitors' Gate**
South wall, beside the Thames · 10

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» **Check availability and prices**

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