

ACCESSIBLE ATTRACTIONS & HOTELS WITHIN LONDON

London is one of the top destinations in the UK and indeed the world. It is home to numerous and varied attractions from the London Eye to the Queen herself. It also has a long and fascinating history – is it any wonder that so many people want to visit?

Preparation and planning are key if you want to make the most out of a trip to the capital. Luckily, the majority of London's top attractions and hotels now understand that it's both their responsibility and to their benefit to be accessible to as many visitors as possible. Nevertheless, in nearly all cases it's best to look up anything you really want to visit in advance. Most attractions have their own websites with accessibility sections that are updated on a regular basis. Write a list of the things that are 'musts' for you, so you know to target them first.

A very promising sign is that there are truly too many accessible hotels and attractions in London to mention them all here. So here's a selection of the best:

Museums: The British Museum (www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/access.aspx) has lifts at one access point, and level access at another. Most galleries and special exhibitions are fully accessible – but do check the website before visiting, which will name any that aren't. There are limited free Blue Badge parking spaces (ring in advance to book). Other museums that rate high for accessibility include the Imperial War Museum, Natural History Museum, V&A Museum, Science Museum and RAF Museum.

Art Galleries: The Tate Modern aims to provide good access for all its visitors. It has a number of level entrances and lifts throughout the building. Find out more here: www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern. You could also take in The National Portrait Gallery, The National Gallery, or The Saatchi Gallery and probably a lot more besides.

London has many wonderful **green and open spaces**. Kew Gardens is beautiful and most of it is accessible to wheelchair users. However read the website carefully – getting off at the train station might be the trickiest bit: www.kew.org/visit-kew-gardens/plan-your-visit/disability-and-access-guide-kew. Hyde Park is glorious on a summer day. Trafalgar Square is a wheelchair-accessible must and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a more recent option to put on your list.

The London Eye is a great attraction that offers level wheelchair access for its pods. Wheel onboard for a magnificent view of the city. There are disabled toilets available.

See: www.londoneye.com/visitor-information/disabled-guests.

Much but not all of **St Paul's Cathedral** is wheelchair accessible. All the same, it is well worth a visit: www.stpauls.co.uk/visits/visits/accessibility. Similarly, **London Zoo** is not fully wheelchair friendly, as many of the buildings inside it are listed, however much of it is still accessible. See here for more: www.zsl.org/zsl-london-zoo/visitor-information/disabled-access.

Many of London's theatres are in old buildings that offer limited wheelchair spaces and you may have to book ahead, but it's worth it for that special show. For example, **Shakespeare's Globe** does have a few wheelchair spots but not many. Book here: www.shakespearesglobe.com/your-visit/access/booking-access-theatre-tickets#general.

Hotels: London has many old buildings, which includes a lot of its hotel stock. So sadly you can't just turn up and assume there will be access. This is changing as hotels modernise and refurbish, but in the meantime, make good use of sites like **disabledgo.com** and **disabledholidays.com** or check individual hotel sites carefully before you book (ringing a real person to double-check details is a good idea if you can bear it).

Once you start looking, there are lots of options. A few examples include **London Southwark Tate Modern Premier Inn**, which has level access to the hotel and is close to Tate, as you might imagine from the name. Or if you prefer to be nearer to the museums in Kensington, how about the **Holiday Inn, Kensington Forum**, with its eight accessible rooms? Meanwhile **The Hilton Wembley** boasts luxurious rooms with roll-in showers.

Whatever it is you want to do, think carefully about what items might help your trip be more comfortable and enjoyable. We offer a vast range of mobility products and devices that can assist you. Doing something as simple as hiring a wheelchair or a 3-wheel walker can make a huge difference to your big day out. Have a browse through our products or call 020 8370 7888 or email **hire@directmobility.co.uk** now for more information.