

# big city LOVE

*The setting for Prince William and Kate Middleton's nuptials, London is not only rich in history but is also famous for its fine cuisine, shopping and great hotels, making it an ideal (albeit unexpected) honeymoon destination!*

**T** rue, it might not be the first place that comes to mind when you're dreaming of honeymoon getaways, but London - with its vibrant culture, fascinating history, inspiring galleries, sophisticated fashion, fine dining, affordable hotels and buzzing West End - is truly a city full of romantic possibilities.

People worry that London is expensive, yet much of it can be experienced free. Drift through museums and galleries or browse century old street markets at Portobello Rd, Camden or Petticoat Lane. In the summer, watch the Changing of the Guard as they leave St James' Palace at 11.30am every day. Drink in the sights and sounds of Soho, stroll through the famous parks, jump on a 'Boris bike' free for half an hour, or marvel at the street entertainers in the West Piazza in Covent Garden. As the sun begins to set, stroll across Albert Bridge and wonder at the majesty of London's skyline lit up along the River Thames.

### Where to lay your head

If you're a fan of modern and funky, K-West Hotel and Spa ([k-west.co.uk](http://k-west.co.uk)) won't disappoint. Described by *Vogue* as bringing 'slick New York lounge bar style to Shepherd's Bush', K-West treats you to organic toiletries, Philippe Starck bathrooms, spacious modern rooms and a bar frequented by rock stars.

Five minutes from Shepherd's Bush tube station, you're ideally placed for getting into central London. If you're a shopaholic, lose yourself over the road at Westfield, which has 300 luxury brand and designer stores, state of the art cinemas and fine dining options. Hotel guests receive a VIP pass, with discounts at selected retailers. Home to London's only snow room, K-West's spa is state of the art! Try the joint treatment Nun Nee Muun - perfect for newly weds, or float in the hydrotherapy pool that has to be experienced to be believed.

For a quintessentially English hotel with traditional décor, check in to The Colonnade ([www.theetoncollection.co.uk](http://www.theetoncollection.co.uk)) restored stucco townhouse located on a leafy tree lined street in Little Venice. Step back in time in the galleried bedrooms with four poster beds dressed with Frette Egyptian cotton. Enquire about the hotel's Romance Package, which includes fresh roses in your room, Champagne on arrival plus chocolate dipped strawberries.

If you're a lover of boutique hotels - look no further than Number Sixteen ([numbersixteenhotel.co.uk](http://numbersixteenhotel.co.uk)), which has 42 individually decorated bedrooms in fashionable South Kensington. Part of the much revered Firmdale group, Number Sixteen combines its fantastic central location with the tranquility of Sumner Place - an exclusive residential street of stunning white stucco townhouses.

The gorgeous interior mixes colourful fabrics with refined furnishings and quirky artefacts. Loved for its honesty bar, the hotel also provide a fragrant linen spray for your pillow at turndown, sumptuous Miller Harris toiletries, as well as a complimentary gift from the manager. Enjoy the gorgeous secluded garden, and ask for a room with a balcony - for those early evening drinks before hitting the West End. In terms of location, you're just around the corner from South Kensington tube station and a short walk to the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), and the nearby international designer stores in Knightsbridge.

### Time to Eat

London is a cosmopolitan city, where every conceivable style of cuisine is available.

Recently opened Pollen Street Social offers exquisite tapas at the bar, a sharing plate at lunch, or a five course a la carte dinner. Then move to the



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** London Tower Bridge, The Colonnade Hotel, the Underground and Number Sixteen.



**WE LOVE!**  
NUMBER SIXTEEN'S ROOMS (LEFT) WHICH COMBINE ELEGANCE WITH A SPLASH OF COLOUR



### Be sure to...

- Go to a free concert at St-Martin-in-the-Fields on Trafalgar Square.
- Climb the 311 steps of Christopher Wren's Monument to the Great Fire of London.
- Hire a deckchair in St James' Park, and listen to the music from the bandstand.
- Eat at Ottolenghi's new restaurant NOPI in Soho (which stands for North of Piccadilly).
- Allow time for some retail therapy on the infamous Kings Rd.
- Take a guided walk and learn about 'hidden' London with [LondonArchitectureWalks.com](http://LondonArchitectureWalks.com)





**WE LOVE!**

BORIS BIKES, PERFECT FOR HONEYMOONERS WHO WANT TO EXPLORE THE CITY AT THEIR LEISURE

dessert bar – perfect for a romantic shared dessert. Or check out ‘Boyds’ (boydsbrasserie.co.uk) on Northumberland Avenue with its 20 foot high ceilings, marble walls, mirrored bar and floating cut glass chandeliers. Owner Charles Boyd, official caterer to the Queen’s summer parties at Buckingham Palace, knows how to offer great food at realistic prices.

If you want open air dining, head to Aqua Nueva (aqua-london.com), overlooking Regent Street. Sample their Infinity Brunch on Sunday – a wonderful marriage of unlimited Louis Roederer Champagne and endless tapas.

Anouska Hempel’s dark and sultry restaurant ‘Blakes’ in Chelsea has been likened to ‘an opium den managed by Coco Chanel’. Hempel’s food is as sensational as the ambience she has created and lends itself to a memorable romantic dinner.

### Leisurely drinks

Deciding where to have a drink proves tricky with so many tempting options – from Asian cocktails til 1am (at Bam-Bou overlooking Charlotte Street) or an eccentric cocktail lounge (try Zetter Townhouse EC1), to drinking al fresco (we recommend the courtyard mews at The Stafford London in St James’s Place). For



a chance to rub shoulders with London’s elite, check out Met Bar, 19 Old Park Lane (open to non-members until 9pm each night). And you can’t visit London without enjoying the romance of a traditional London pub, so try Thomas Cubitt in Belgravia for original fireplaces and wall panelling. But for the most impressive place for a drink in London, you can’t go past The Booking Office – once a train station, its 60 foot marble pillars, Gothic windows and corncicing is a treat in itself!

### Soak up the culture

While you are in town, enjoy the permanent collections at many of London’s best galleries and museums free of charge and take in a show in the West End. For great discounts on theatre tickets and nearby restaurants check out visitlondon.eolts.co.uk.

In the early evening take a stroll along the Thames to the refurbished Savoy Hotel and mingle with the rich and famous in the extravagant new Beaufort Bar.



### Useful Websites

[londontown.co.uk](http://londontown.co.uk)  
[toptable.com](http://toptable.com)  
[mrandmrsmith.co.uk](http://mrandmrsmith.co.uk)  
[londonisfree.com](http://londonisfree.com)

### Getting around

Buy an Oyster card for bus, tube, and train travel. The London Underground (‘the tube’) is undergoing major upgrades so check [tfl.gov.uk](http://tfl.gov.uk) before travelling. The black cab is a London icon, but if one can’t be found, text ‘CAB’ to 60835 and London Transport will text the two nearest mini cab numbers to your phone. Need a Tourist Information Centre? Visit 1 Regent Street (exit 3 at Piccadilly Circus tube).

### Best times to visit

**August** Hotels offer best deals and you can still enjoy London in summer.

**December** Christmas Day is the cheapest day to stay in a London hotel! Enjoy a traditional Christmas lunch then go ice skating in Hyde Park as the sun sets.

### Top Three Things to Do...

**1** Spend an afternoon at the Tower of London, followed by an evening tour of Tower Bridge, which houses her majesty’s Crown Jewels. Over 900 years old it has been a royal palace, prison, armoury and even a zoo in its lifetime!

**2** The beautiful Gothic Westminster Abbey is a must. Kings and Queens have been crowned here since 1066 and most recently, the world watched in delight as Prince William and Catherine married in the Abbey. Wander through the romantic Little Cloister leading to College Gardens.

**3** Sip a glass of Champagne on board the London Eye, the world’s largest ferris wheel, 135 metres above London. If you’re feeling truly indulgent, upgrade to your own private capsule, order a bottle and canapés too.

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Boris bikes, Ottolengji’s NOPI, Boyds’ interior and the London Eye overlooks the Thames.

