



48 hours in...

LONDON

This dynamic city is full of fun and quirky activities for the whole family.

WORDS ZOEY GOTO

NEED TO KNOW



GETTING THERE

Qantas flies directly from Perth to London; the trip takes about 17 hours.



GETTING AROUND

London has a good public transport system, with many areas connected by the underground tube system or red double-decker buses. For both, you can either buy a prepaid Oyster card or use a contactless credit card. Note that some of the older tube stations don't have step-free access, but Londoners are generally good at helping with prams on stairways. tfl.gov.uk



BEST TIME TO GO

While there's no guarantee of sunny climes in the UK, July and August are generally pleasant. The latter is a particularly lively month to visit London, as museums and venues across the capital put on extra family activities for the school holidays.



DAY ONE

MORNING

Start your day by catching a performance at the charming Little Angel Theatre in Islington (littleangeltheatre.com), a London institution for families for more than 50 years. It's a really varied program and tickets start at just £5. There are also relaxed performances tailored to audiences with autism, sensory or communication needs and learning disabilities.

Post show, Highbury & Islington tube station is within walking distance of the theatre – head there to catch the Victoria line straight down to Green Park in 10 minutes.

LUNCH

Enjoy London's Green Park in style with a pre-booked picnic hamper lunch from Duke's Hotel (dukeshotel.com). They'll do all the hard work – from preparing a delicious homemade picnic spread to setting it all up for you under a tree in the park. If you really want to go all out, for an extra fee you'll receive three hours of private butler service. There's a classic, veggie or vegan adult hamper, and the kids' picnic includes pigs in blankets and a crowd-pleasing strawberry trifle.

AFTERNOON

From Green Park, it's just a short stroll over to Buckingham Palace, where on select dates you can tour the grand staterooms of the Queen's London residence (rct.uk). Older children in particular will love the free multimedia tour, narrated by a digital corgi, no less!

There's also a lovely family play pavilion with games and activities for under-12s.

STAY

Self-catering apartments can often be the most cost-effective and flexible choice for families. Bed down for the night in a serviced family apartment at Cuckooz (cuckooz.co.uk), situated in the vibrant Old Street area, a hip location brimming with young families, parks and museums. The stylish two-bedroom apartments have been specifically designed for families and are fully kitted out with cots and kids' beds as well as a wigwam, ball pit and plenty of toys to entertain little ones. Each apartment also has an outside terrace and kitchen with washing machine, so you can pack minimally and have the option of eating in.

DAY TWO

MORNING

Waking up in London's Old Street area, you'll find plenty to occupy kids within walking distance: meeting the animals at Hackney City Farm (hacknecityfarm.co.uk), sampling the famous pancakes at The Breakfast Club (thebreakfastclubcafes.com) and visiting the wonderful V&A Museum of Childhood (vam.ac.uk), which has a huge collection of historical toys and workshops for kids. The museum is open every day, entry is free and there's also a cafe with kids' lunchboxes on site. When you're all played out, take the tube outside from Bethnal Green to South Kensington to embark on a science-tastic afternoon.

LUNCH

Just opposite South Kensington tube station, you'll find The Ampersand Hotel (ampersandhotel.com), home to the most entertaining and educational high tea in London. Its award-winning science tea experience begins with concocting your own lemonade in test tubes before tucking into planet-shaped pastries presented in clouds of dramatic dry ice. Better yet, they offer gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options. You can also dig for chocolate

Kids will love a trip to Buckingham Palace



dinosaurs and squirt various potions into cakes – it's ridiculously good fun!

AFTERNOON

Post lunch, it's just a quick skip down the road to Science Museum (sciencemuseum.org.uk), which is home to the Wonderlab interactive gallery. The educational-play space is packed with hands-on experiments to engage children of all ages. There are also plenty of fun-filled live demonstrations, many of which involve explosions and blasting rockets, which always go down a storm with older kids.

STAY

Round off your weekend in style with a night at Brown's Hotel (roccofortehotels.com), London's most family-friendly luxury hotel, which is just around the corner from Green Park tube station. This super-accommodating hotel can provide interconnecting rooms and baby equipment, there's a fantastic restaurant with kids' menus and a children's library, plus the family rooms are set up with cute kids' linen and pint-size slippers and robes, while the evening turn-down involves cookies and milk. What's not to love? **ft**



Go to familytravel.com.au for travel inspiration, ideas and tips to turn your travel dreams into reality. Be sure to sign up to the e-newsletter to receive the best family content direct to your inbox.

Cuckooz apartment is perfect for families



Wonderlab at the Science Museum