

Visiting London in October 2026: What's On, What to Book and What to Know

Tracy Collins with Charley Sullivan of WalksDevour

Tracy and Charley look ahead to London in October 2026: the weather and half term, where to find autumn colour, Halloween and what's on, the Christmas and Bonfire Night tickets to book now, how to still see the Ceremony of the Keys, and the new WalksDevour Express Kensington Gardens and Kensington Palace tour. WalksDevour code LTP5 gives 5% off tours booked before midnight UK time on Thursday 8 October 2026.

Tracy Halloween at the Tower of London, three NFL games, Diwali in Trafalgar Square, and colour coming across the parks. If you're visiting London in October, this is what's on, what to book, and what to pack.

Charley And I'll tell you what October really feels like on the ground, and the brand new tour that I recommend this month.

Tracy I'm Tracy from UK Travel Planning, this is Charley from WalksDevour, and this is London in October.

Hi and welcome to our monthly London bonus episode, brought to you by our sister brand, London Travel Planning, and sponsored again this month by WalksDevour. I'm delighted again to have Charley Sullivan back with me. Charley runs the London programme for WalksDevour and was with us last month for our bonus London in September episode. There's a new offer for our community at the end from WalksDevour. If you're a podcast listener watching on YouTube for the first time, do check the show notes and hit subscribe so you can find out exactly what's coming. Now, let's talk about visiting London in October, Charley. What do we need to know?

Charley London in October is my favourite season. It just becomes so cosy and warm. Temperatures change slightly in October. It is England after all, so you will see lower temperatures and a lot more rain, so always bring an umbrella, no matter what you do. The parks and gardens are beautiful because you get the vibrant red and orange leaves falling onto the ground, which makes the whole of London absolutely beautiful. We have lots of seasonal events in October: Halloween coming up, autumnal events, cultural festivals.

The nice thing with October is that although it's still busy, it's much less busy than the summer season. You'll find shorter wait times at the top attractions. And then just walking down the street, popping into any pub and being cosy with the lit-up fires, a warm and welcoming setting. And I can't forget, it's the perfect time for a traditional Sunday roast.

Tracy Oh, absolutely. It is a lovely time to be in London. And you mentioned the weather, and us Brits love talking about the weather, don't we, Charley? It's a national pastime.

Charley Always.

Tracy So if you're visiting in October, here are the averages so you can get an idea of what to expect. The daytime high is usually around 16 degrees, so not too bad, 61 Fahrenheit, and it drops down to about 10, or 50 Fahrenheit. I love finding out the statistics, I'm a bit of a statistics nerd, but apparently we can expect rain on roughly 10 days of the month. So one in three days you can expect some rain.

I always look at the long-range forecast before I visit. You can check it on the Met Office, and they're saying it's going to be warmer than average, so something to look forward to, Charley. There's going to be some wet and windy weather, it's October, but also the potential for some nice drier days. I'll link to the Met Office so you can check just before you fly. Another thing to expect in October, and this is not something I enjoy, is the decrease in daylight hours during the month, from about 12 hours at the beginning of the month to about 10 hours at the end. And there's another important event for teachers, which I used to love: it's half term for schools in England and Wales, Monday the 26th to Friday the 30th of October.

The schools will break up on Friday the 23rd, so expect the 24th to be busy: busy on the trains, at the airports and on the roads. The Scottish schools break up earlier, around the middle of October, so that's only going to be an issue if you're going up to Edinburgh. But like Charley said, the first few weeks of October will be quieter, and the last week will be busy because all the kids are off school and everybody comes down to London. So, Charley, what does half term actually mean for London and some of the popular sights, such as the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey? Is there a time of day you'd recommend people visit those sights during half term?

Charley Funnily enough, even though I said October is the quieter month, and it is compared with the summer, it's still one of the busiest parts because of the half-term week. We get a surge in local and regional visitors, which is quite normal really. A lot of families take day trips to London through half term. The biggest tip for me is timed entry, because it really peaks during that week. Whenever you're booking, always book a timed entry, because you're less likely to have to wait in long queues. Public transport will be busier through that week, 100%.

Between 10 and 4 will be the busiest times. Early morning and later in the evening, you'll probably find it calms down a little. All the museums do half-term specials for the kids, because a lot of families come up for the week. My biggest tip for half term would be to book everything in advance so you don't have to worry. Shift your schedules as well: don't try to do tours in the middle of the day, go for early morning tours, or later, after 3.30pm, because you'll have a much quieter experience. And there are quieter alternatives if you don't want to do the big sights that week.

Tracy Perfect. Now let's talk a little about packing, because I always get asked in the Facebook groups what I should pack. You mentioned an umbrella. What I always travel with when I go anywhere in the UK, and have in my bag all the time, is a small fold-up waterproof jacket. It's an absolute staple. I get stopped so often because it's really pretty: it's one from Next, yellow with flowers on it, and people ask where I got it. So make sure you have a waterproof coat with you, because they say one in three days it's going to rain. I'm also known for talking about comfy shoes.

There's nothing worse, especially in London where you're going to be doing a lot of walking, than not having something comfortable on your feet, preferably waterproof as well. And pack layers. Charley, you said it last month, dress like an onion. So what will you actually be wearing when you're out and about in London, especially by the end of the month when the weather will definitely be changing?

Charley As I said, this is my favourite month and I'm a big cosy jumper wearer. You'll normally find me in a pair of jeans, my warm boots and a big cosy knit jumper, probably with a little scarf by the end of October. I have to admit this year may be different, seeing as we might be in for a slightly warmer climate. But you'll definitely see me in a light scarf and a light jacket, probably a cardigan under there somewhere. I don't do well with cold weather, which is why it's my favourite season, because I just bundle up. I always have an umbrella on me, and I always take a raincoat no matter what. Even through the summer I've always got a raincoat, because you just never know.

But yes, bundled up, cosy and warm is where I'll be by the end of October.

Tracy That always sounds good. There's something quite nice about getting the jumpers and jackets back out of the cupboard, knowing you're going to need them for the next few months. Also important to know if you're heading to the UK next month: the clocks go back one hour. Different places around the world have different daylight saving dates, but in the UK the clocks go back one hour at 2am on the last Sunday, which is the 25th of October. So after that, it'll start getting dark earlier, around half past four, which was always my least favourite thing. I used to think, no, it's going to get dark that much earlier.

But there are some nice things that come with it. Like you said, it's cosier, you can go to the pubs with the fires on, and it is lovely. The other advantage of this time of year is the autumn colour. Because it's been quite a warm year, I was reading that the parks are really lush, and from around the middle of October onwards you're going to get the best of it. So I thought I'd recommend some places to go. St Dunstan in the East will be absolutely beautiful. It's a bombed-out church designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the City of London, not far from the Tower of London.

The garden inside the ruins will be absolutely beautiful. Little Venice, along the canal: Doug's got some beautiful photos and videos from when he was there last October, and it was absolutely stunning. And another place I always love to go to is Greenwich. I never need an excuse to go to Greenwich, and Greenwich Park will be absolutely beautiful at this time of year. Charley, do you have a favourite place for autumn leaves in London?

Charley I do, actually. My favourite is Richmond Park. It's stunning. It's very famous for its wild deer, so you'll see a lot of deer roaming around. It's full of oak trees, and when their leaves drop, to me they're the most beautiful leaves, with the colours on them. So 100% Richmond Park.

And this is a bit of a curveball, because I used to live there, but Crystal Palace Park for me is one of the most beautiful parks in London. So definitely head there for the autumn leaves as well.

Tracy Perfect. That's four or five good ones, and we'll add those in the show notes, so do go and check those out. Now let's talk about what's on. There's far too much happening in London in October to cover all of it here. We'd be here for the next hour and a half just going through the list.

Charley Yes.

Tracy So I've picked out some of my favourites, and there's a full list on londontravelplanning.com in our Events in London in October article, which I'll link to in the show notes. These are the ones I'd plan to do. As Charley mentioned, we've got Halloween, which has become more and more popular over the last few years. When I was a kid it wasn't such a big thing, but it's a big deal now. It runs from the 24th of October to the 1st of November, so it overlaps with the school holidays. The Tower of London has a Halloween programme, all included in your admission. It's aimed at families, so nothing too scary.

But don't go dressed up, because apparently they won't let you in if you do. I didn't know that. Hampton Court Palace has the same dates and also has Halloween things going on, and apparently it will be a bit scarier. I always find the Haunted Gallery a bit scary anyway, so it's going to be even scarier. That's a cool one, and an easy train trip from Waterloo.

And then there's Halloween at Kew, an illuminated trail from the 16th of October to the 1st of November. That will probably sell out, so don't wait until you get to the UK to book it. If you want to do that, I'd get it booked. What about you, Charley? What have you got planned for Halloween?

Charley I've never been big into Halloween, although when I was travelling I was in America a lot, so I got pulled into the whole big Halloween theme. For me, our daughter has just turned one, so we'll probably take her to pick her first ever pumpkin. It's not so big in the area where we live. But I have a lot of respect for people who go trick-or-treating, which we never did as kids. I was never allowed, because my mum said it was deemed as begging. Now, if you put a lit pumpkin outside your door, kids are allowed to come to your door, which I think is a really nice way to do it, because a lot of elderly people get quite scared if they're on their own.

So we'll have our pumpkin up, and we'll wait until next year to take our daughter out. But definitely pumpkin picking, and my whole house will be done up in autumn colours and Halloween and everything else.

Tracy

That sounds really pretty. I remember when I lived in Canada a long time ago, I looked after twins, and the lady I worked for made gorgeous outfits for them. Next year your daughter will be a great age to go out and experience it. Now, exhibitions. Again, there's a lot on in October, so I'll just go through a few that I thought were quite cool.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year opens at the Natural History Museum on the 16th. That's always something fantastic to see. I'm always amazed by some of the fabulous photos people take around the world, so if you're interested in photography, that's a great place to pop in. Frida: The Making of an Icon is at Tate Modern until January. I'm really sad I missed that, so if anybody's been, let me know what it was like. And Charley, you sent me some information about the David Bowie Centre at the V&A.

The Bowie collection is there. I think it might be £5 for the Bowie side, but either way entry is released in timed batches, so you'll have to book ahead, because I think it's going to be really popular. Of course, heading to London you've also got the theatre, and there's a big opening next month: The Lives of Others at the Adelphi. It opens on the 14th of October and runs into January. It's the stage version of the Oscar-winning German film set in 1980s East Berlin, starring Keira Knightley.

So if you want to see Keira on stage, this is your opportunity. It's a strictly limited run. I can imagine getting Keira Knightley for anything more than a few months would be quite difficult, because she's pretty busy. So if you want to see that, I'd get it booked. Later in the month there's Diwali on the Square in Trafalgar Square on Sunday the 25th of October, from 1 until 7. It's free, you don't need a ticket, and there'll be lots of dance, music and food stalls. It's also the day the clocks go back, so you get an extra hour in bed first.

So you can lie in and then head over to Trafalgar Square. And for our American listeners, I bet plenty of you are heading to London next month for this: there are three NFL games in London in October. The Colts against the Commanders at Tottenham on Sunday the 4th. Sunday the 11th, the Eagles against the Jaguars. I have no idea where these teams come from, so let me know. And Sunday the 18th, the Texans and the Jaguars at Wembley. If you are heading to London to watch the NFL, get in touch.

We want to know how the game went. Is there anything else in October, Charley, that you'd say people should be doing?

Charley

One of my favourites, which I did for the first time a few years ago, is at the Warner Bros. Studio Tour. They turn the whole Great Hall into floating pumpkins and Death Eater encounters, and it's amazing. If you really want to get into the Halloween spirit, head to the studios. It's so much fun and incredibly well done. The other one, which I don't think gets mentioned much, is the London Dungeon. It's open all year round, but through October the scariness gets hyped up a bit more, and they do Halloween-exclusive shows highlighting villains like Jack the Ripper and Sweeney Todd. So it's a really good month to go.

And some of the restaurants and pubs with rooftops do Halloween film screenings, so do some research on where you want to go. That's really fun to do as well. So yes, I'd recommend those.

Tracy So plenty to do. There's loads to do in October, it really is a great month to visit. Now I also want to talk a little about what to book and when, because I've had loads of questions about booking ahead. Now is the time to start thinking about booking some of the Christmas and New Year things, because they will get booked up. The first one is Christmas at Kew, from the 13th of November to the 3rd of January, and that's on sale now.

I'd honestly take your daughter to that, Charley, because it's amazing. I'm sure she'll love it. Doug and I did it a couple of years ago, and it's really good. And if you don't want to take your daughter, there are adult-only evenings on the 3rd and 9th of December, so you can have a date night at Kew enjoying all the Christmas lights. Another one is Hyde Park Winter Wonderland, from the 19th of November to the 3rd of January. That's also on sale now. And then Bonfire Night.

We have to talk about Bonfire Night, which is coming in November. The big displays are on Saturday the 7th and Sunday the 8th of November. Alexandra Palace is the one to go to. It runs on both nights, but the Sunday display starts earlier, so if you're visiting with kids, that's a great one to go to. If you're not from the UK and you're wondering what Bonfire Night is: on the 5th of November 1605, a group of plotters tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament with the King inside. Horror. And Guy Fawkes was caught in the cellar with the gunpowder.

Ever since then we've marked it with bonfires and fireworks. We make a guy, and the guy goes on top of the bonfire. It's a really British tradition that you'll find everywhere, and it's really good fun. When I was a kid, that was what we celebrated more than Halloween. It was always Guy Fawkes. I'm glad it still goes on, because it's a great British tradition and it recognises the history of Guy Fawkes trying to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Now, Charley, what are people booking with you for October? What's popping off this month?

Charley One of the tours that has really taken off for October is our pub tour, Tastes, Tales and Traditional Ales, in the City of London, where we visit four different pubs and head through Fleet Street with Sweeney Todd, and talk about Sir Christopher Wren and the literary figures who went to these pubs to write books and get their imaginations going. That is one of our top sellers for October, and I think it's because it's getting cooler and the light is dimming. The tour starts at 3 o'clock, so by mid to late October you'll see the light fading by 4 in the afternoon. Once we go into these pubs you get a real sense of cosiness and warmth, and a different feel to the tour from the rest of the season.

So that's one of our best tours at the moment. It's really hot for October.

Tracy That's brilliant to hear, because that's one I absolutely love. I think I've done it a couple of times, and I'm always happy to go on it. It's always great fun, whoever the guide is, and the people you meet along the way. It's the tastes, but it's the tales that go with them that make it such a fun and informative tour. So if you're heading over in October, get that one booked. Now, I'm also going to mention the Bayeux Tapestry and Her Life in Style, because I've had so many enquiries about them since the September episode aired.

A few people are even thinking of coming to London because they want to see both of these exhibitions.

Charley Wow.

Tracy So I just want to say they are sold out for the rest of the year. I've done so many enquiries for people. You won't get tickets for either, you just can't. I've searched everything trying to find tickets. If you really want to see these and you can come back, the Bayeux Tapestry tickets for January to March are your best bet. They go on sale on Tuesday the 6th of October for members of the British Museum.

The public release is on the 21st of October. They haven't said anything yet about April to July, so if you're planning way ahead, I'll let you know when that comes out, because Doug and I are planning to book it. But remember, if you're a member of the British Museum, you've got a better chance of getting tickets. Her Life in Style, the exhibition of the late Queen's clothing, which is fabulous, has been extended to the 18th of April next year. Tickets from January onwards are your best bet. There's no waiting list and no walk-up for that. I think everybody's been blown away by how incredibly popular these are.

We also talked a lot about the Ceremony of the Keys last month, and that was actually one of the most watched parts of our chat, Charley. There's a huge amount of interest in it. The Historic Royal Palaces tickets for October have gone. They were released on the 1st of September, so they are sold out. But Charley, people can still go, can't they?

Charley Of course they can. They can come with us at WalksDevour. We have a VIP Ceremony of the Keys tour that runs twice a week, and October is actually the last month for us as well.

Tracy As well.

Charley It doesn't tend to run through the low season, because of the light and everything else. So if you really want to come and enjoy the Ceremony of the Keys, it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, come to us at WalksDevour. You start with the Yeoman Warder for about an hour around the grounds of the Tower of London. We don't go inside anything, it's all around the outside, but you'll hear from him about the history and what it's like to live there. And then you'll witness the Ceremony of the Keys, the closing of the Tower of London. I get goosebumps just talking about it.

It's a phenomenal tour. So if you're struggling to get tickets, come to us at WalksDevour.

Tracy Perfect. A couple of other quick things. The Buckingham Palace State Rooms have closed for the year, so you can't do those any more, but the Royal Mews is open. Windsor Castle is open all year round, but from the 20th to the 22nd of October there's a state visit, so it will be shut. That often catches people out: they don't realise Windsor Castle is a working castle, so it can close for things like state visits. So do check if you're planning a trip to Windsor next month. Now, Charley, tour of the month. WalksDevour run award-winning small group and private cultural, historical and food tours in London, across Europe and in North America.

And Doug and I absolutely love them. I've heard, Charley, that you've got a brand new tour this month, so I thought you could tell us all about it.

- Charley** I have got a brand new tour, and it's one of my favourites. We already run an extended version of this tour: Kensington Palace and afternoon tea, which includes the guard change, a special afternoon tea at the Orangery and a visit to the palace. This is an Express Kensington Palace tour, which will be running all through the low season: November, December, January and February.
- Tracy** Yes.
- Charley** It's an express tour, and you have an hour and a half walk around the gardens of Kensington Palace. You might think, oh, it's just the gardens, but these gardens are exquisite. You meet at the Albert Memorial and head through to the Diana Memorial Fountain, dedicated to Princess Diana, who died in the car crash in '97, which, can you believe, is nearly 30 years ago. You'll see the Peter Pan statue, then head over to the Serpentine Galleries, and then we have a wonderful walk around the Long Water, with the beautiful wildlife, trees and nature, and head to the Italian Gardens.
- This is my favourite part of the gardens. They were a gift from Albert to Victoria. It's an elaborate mix of four basins with central rosettes carved out of marble and fountains, and they're Grade II listed by Historic England. We then head round to the Round Pond and through to the Sunken Garden, which I won't say too much about. Honestly, it's the most beautiful garden I've seen. And then you have free time inside the palace with an audio guide, to take as long as you want looking around Kensington Palace, which is a very underrated, beautiful palace. Everyone thinks of Buckingham Palace, but honestly, Kensington is just as beautiful.
- So that's our tour. It starts at 10am, and we run it pretty much every day. So come and join us through the winter for a beautiful, cosy walk through the gardens and the palace.
- Tracy** And because it's not as long as your full one, there's a little less walking, so if you're somebody who finds a lot of walking a bit too much, that's probably a really good option. And I agree, Kensington Palace really is underrated and always worth a visit. What's availability looking like through October, Charley?
- Charley** Through October we're really good. We're running daily, so we've still got plenty of space. It only went live a month ago, and we've already had bookings for September. So it's already looking really good.
- Tracy** That's brilliant. We'll put a link to that in the show notes and in the YouTube description. Now, we've had some questions this month, so I thought we'd go through those. The first one came in by email from Karen, who asked: what do I need to know if I'm visiting during the school holiday week at the end of October? I think we covered a lot of that. It's making sure you book things ahead of time, including restaurants, and go for the early slots if you can, or later in the afternoon. The same for theatre, get that booked. And the museums will be busy as well, won't they, because all the kids go to the museums.
- Charley** Museums will be crazy busy, and that's why I always say either go early or later in the day. Don't try to get through that mad part in the middle.

- Tracy** Absolutely not. And some of the museums have late-night openings, so that's always worth checking. The second question came in from Julia in Melbourne, who left it on SpeakPipe: can we still see the Changing of the Guard in October? I'll put this one to you, Charley.
- Charley** Yes, the Changing of the Guard still runs through October. It runs Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. But bear in mind this can change at any moment, especially with the change in the weather. If it's raining on the day, the palace can cancel the Changing of the Guard at the last minute, or for another reason that's out of our control. But those four days should be running through October.
- Tracy** And I think your daughter's not very happy about the idea of it being cancelled. She's really grumpy about that. She says, don't you cancel the Changing of the Guard, people come to see that. Well, thank you so much, Charley, and your daughter, for joining us for this episode. It's been wonderful.
- It's always fantastic to chat. Now, before you go, we do have an exclusive offer for our community, thanks to Charley and WalksDevour: 5% off tours with the code LTP5. That's LTP5, and I'll put it in the show notes as well. Book before midnight UK time on the 8th of October, and you can use it on any tour departing right through to the end of 2026. The link is in the description on YouTube and in the show notes, so go and book. Charley, thanks so much for joining us again this month to chat about everything happening in London in October.
- Charley** Thank you for having me again. It's been an absolute pleasure, and I hope to see lots of you on our tours.
- Tracy** Perfect. For planning the trip itself, head to our London site, londontravelplanning.com, where you'll find our guide to visiting London in October and our full list of events in London in October. Every date and everything we've talked about today is linked in the show notes. Come back on Tuesday the 29th for our regular podcast, episode 220, which is all about where to stay in London.
- And I'll be back on Thursday the 29th of October with the next London bonus video podcast, all about visiting London in November, which of course means Bonfire Night, the Lord Mayor's Show and the Christmas lights going on. All very exciting. But until then, happy UK travel planning.