

London to Paris
on foot by way of
The Western Front
Thursday, 26 April 2018

Stage 1: Imperial War Museum to Westminster Abbey

The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior

This first stage links two crucially important sites in London, both of which deserve equal status as starting points for The Western Front route to Paris.

The **Imperial War Museum London** is the capital's pre-eminent showcase for First World War artefacts. It's easy to lose yourself for hours here, delving into various and often unexpected aspects of wartime history.

Westminster Abbey, reached in time for evensong service at the day's end, marks a poignant introduction to the long journey ahead. For here, beneath the nave, lies buried an unknown soldier of The Great War – whose presence symbolises the devastating loss of life suffered by the people of Britain as a result of the global conflict of 1914-1918. A mirror-image tomb, at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, commemorates the same sentiment for the people of France.

Sombre thoughts aside, today's short walk is packed with fascinating and little-known sights found down the back streets of South London and Westminster. The route zigzags through a series of humble but inviting green spaces, crossing the Thames by Lambeth Bridge. There's time to explore the **Garden Museum**, the spacious and vibrant **Newport Street Gallery**, and Southwark's **West Square** – an unspoilt oasis of Georgian architecture. Also en route: Rodin's sculpture of *The Burghers of Calais*, and the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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Timetable

This is just a rough guide. We may not follow it exactly. There are many public transport options along the route, meaning that you can return home from the walk at any stage.

0930 Meet under the guns of the battleships HMS *Ramillies* and *Resolution*
1000 Tour of the Imperial War Museum (free admission, donation welcome)
1130 Through Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park to the Tibetan Peace Garden
1145 Picnic refreshments in West Square Gardens
1200 Cross Walcot Square
1215 Drinks at The Ship on Kennington Lane
1240 Lambeth Walk Doorstep Green
1300 Newport Street Gallery
1315 Lunch at Damien Hirst's Pharmacy 2 restaurant (£15 for two courses)
1415 Old Paradise Gardens
1430 Visit the Garden Museum (£10 admission)
1530 Cross the River Thames by Lambeth Bridge
1545 Views of Lambeth Palace from Victoria Tower Gardens; Rodin's sculpture
1600 St John's, Smith Square – now a concert hall for classical music
1615 Former residence of Siegfried Sassoon, WWI soldier and poet
1630 The Dean's Yard, Westminster
1645 Westminster Abbey and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior
1700 Evensong at the Abbey (free admission)

Weather

A breezy day with a mix of sun and cloud. Some light showers possible around midday. Temperatures from 10° to 14°C. Forecast at <https://bit.ly/2K93ah6>.

Distance

About 4 kilometres / 2.5 miles

Where & When

Be at the Imperial War Museum London by 9:30am on Thursday, April 26th. We're meeting in front of the main entrance under the huge battleship guns; they're unmissable. If you need to get in touch, text me on +44 7932 953 174.

If you're coming by public transport, you'll probably want to take a London Underground Bakerloo line train to Lambeth North. Arrive there by 9:15am.

Exit the station and cross the main road in front you, Westminster Bridge Road. Turn immediately left, keeping the Oasis Academy South Bank and church spire on your right. Continue about 200m along Westminster Bridge Road, then turn right into King Edward Walk and follow this to a T-junction with Lambeth Road.

Cross Lambeth Road by the zebra crossing, then turn right and immediately left to enter Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park. Follow the footpath around to the left as it tracks by the old wall of the former Dog & Duck pub. The Imperial War Museum and naval guns are dead ahead.

What to Wear

Wear a pair of comfortable shoes that have some tread on the sole. Lightweight walking shoes are perfect. Trainers are fine too. It's also a good idea to wear a couple of warm outer layers – for example, a jumper and a light jacket.

What to Bring

Bring a small day pack / backpack, and pack it with:

- Rain gear (just in case)
- A hat and gloves
- A bottle of water
- Some light snacks
- Camera and/or smartphone

Food & Drink

We'll stop briefly for light picnic refreshments in West Square, a quick drink at The Ship, and a proper lunch at Pharmacy 2, the Damien Hirst restaurant inside the Newport Street Gallery. Má Là Sichuan, 37 Monck Street, is good for dinner.

Useful Links

Here's some information about points along the way:

Imperial War Museum London

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-london>

West Square

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Square

The Ship

www.theshiplondon.com

Newport Street Gallery

<https://www.newportstreetgallery.com>

Pharmacy 2 restaurant

<http://www.pharmacyrestaurant.com>

Garden Museum

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garden_Museum

Lambeth Palace

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lambeth_Palace

Victoria Tower Gardens

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Tower_Gardens

Westminster Abbey

<http://www.westminster-abbey.org>