

# MUCKY DUCK ENGLAND TOUR

**What:** The First Annual Mucky Duck Tour of English Pubs and other Attractions.

**When:** May 19 - 28, 2020. (Tentative).

**Your Guides:** Marcus Johnson, Kevin Green.



**Join us as we show you some of the special places in our homeland of England.**

*Marcus and Kevin will provide you with a unique opportunity to travel with friends and acquaintances to historic England. Expect a trip that will allow you to visit some of the usual tourist sites, but also one that takes you off the beaten path, and at a pace that will allow you plenty of time so that you're not continually rushing from place to place. Group size will be eight to ten adventurers plus your two guides.*

*We'll handle the flight and hotel bookings once we've received confirmation from you. All you pay for up front is your round trip flight and the hotel deposit.*

*You'll have the flexibility to tailor your own itinerary if you wish to do so. Once in England we'll purchase the train tickets for your chosen day excursions. On each day trip there will be time for you to enjoy a pub lunch, and visit some enjoyable, historic sites. If our destination that day doesn't interest you, skip it and do your own thing!*

*London is one of the world's most expensive cities. We'll cut costs by buying train tickets in advance, using the Oyster Card to save money on the London Tube, eating pub meals whenever possible, and we'll show you how Londoners save money by grabbing our lunches from the local shops and brown-bag it if you like. Of course, you're always welcome to choose your own dining options at our destinations.*

## Itinerary

Important note: We make every attempt to follow the below itinerary while remaining flexible.

**Day 1:** 6:00 p.m. (CST): We board our one-hour United Airlines flight from Des Moines to Chicago O'Hare. Our luggage is checked through to London saving us time in Chicago.

9:00 p.m. (CST): We board our overnight flight from Chicago to London Heathrow for the eight-hour trans-Atlantic flight.



**Day 2:** 11:30 a.m. (GMT): We arrive at London's Heathrow Airport. In the next hour we proceed through Her Majesty's Customs, then retrieve our luggage. We then pass through the Immigration area, followed by the airport public space until we find the Underground (Tube) station where we'll stop to purchase our Oyster Cards. Fortunately, rush hour will be over. The Oyster Card is the Tube pass that will save us money as we zip around the London Underground network over the next few days.



*Figure 1. Day 2 - The Sherlock Holmes Pub!*

We make our way via the Underground arriving at Kings Cross/St. Pancras train station around 2:00 p.m. It's a comfortable ride via the Tube, and once we reach the station it's only a seven -minute walk to our modern hotel (The Premier Inn), which is situated across the street from the British Library. The traffic is busy here, but the rooms are quiet.

The hotel has all the modern amenities, including a restaurant and bar. A daily breakfast buffet is available for an extra charge. There's also a coffee shop and a

pub (The Euston Flyer), right next door to our hotel, and there are several other pubs and restaurants within a three- block radius.

We'll check in to our rooms around 3:00 p.m. and allow everyone time to get situated. Past experience tells us that it's a good idea to stay in your room and get a couple hours of sleep. Then, it's best to force yourself to stay up until your normal bed- time.

We'll head out about 5:30 p.m. and travel by Tube for a short ride to Westminster and some outdoor viewing of Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the Royal Horse Guards, Buckingham Palace, and Trafalgar Square.

We end our walk at the Sherlock Holmes Pub, where we'll have time for a couple of pints of your choice of ales, stouts and lagers. The Sherlock Holmes pub is a traditional English pub serving pints and pub food.

As well as a bar and restaurant, the pub has a secret - a complete recreation of Holmes and Watson's study and sitting room with a large collection of objects and photographs related to the characters from the books and adaptations.

We'll return to our hotel by 10:30 p.m., for some much-needed rest!

**Day 3:** After our hotel breakfast we travel by Tube to the Tower of London. We briefly view the remnants of a Roman Wall. (During Roman times London was known as Londinium).



*Figure 2. The Tower of London.*

Crossing the road via pedestrian tunnel, we explore the Tower of London grounds, Figure 1. Stay with the group, or search by yourself. Our group will be taking one of the free, guided tours given by the Yeoman Warders, more commonly known as Beefeaters. See the Crown Jewels and the fine collection of medieval weapons, along with viewing the spot where several enemies of the Crown were beheaded.

The Tower also provides great views of the London skyline and Tower Bridge, and there's also plenty of people-watching to do from the shores of the Thames.

We'll grab lunch at The Olde Cheshire Cheese pub for a sample of a local ale or lager. The current pub dates from 1667, but is actually older when you consider the original pub burned to the ground, along with most everything else, in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Check out the list of English monarchs that were in power during this pub's reign; very impressive! And sit in the same room where Charles Dickens drank his ale while probably composing some of his famous writings. *Read more about this pub in the list of pubs at the end of the itinerary.*

Returning to the Thames, we take a photo op at Tower Bridge, still in use and a major crossing of the Thames. Great views of the London skyline here! Daily 40,000 people cross the bridge in both directions. The bridge is raised around 3 times a day but requires 24 hours' notice from any ship that needs to pass.

After the Tower Bridge stop, we split up into a couple of London black cabs for a short ride to the Mayflower Inn. This is where the ship Mayflower departed from on its way to America, stopping at Plymouth, England along the way before trekking across the Atlantic. We'll down a pint on the outdoor patio which sits on the Thames, and then we take the Tube back to our hotel.

We'll celebrate our first day in London with a traditional English meal of fish and chips, or maybe a steak and ale pie. Of course, we'll save room for some dessert! Maybe a nice treacle pudding or some Spotted Dick. *Read more about this pub in the list of pubs at the end of the itinerary.*

**Day 4:** After our hotel breakfast, we travel by Tube to London's Paddington train station for the hour-long train journey to Windsor, home of Windsor Castle, the largest and oldest occupied castle in the world, and home to Her Majesty the Queen when she's not at Buckingham Palace or any of her other royal residences.

London Paddington opened in 1854. Since the 1960s, Paddington station has been known as the home of everybody's favorite cuddly toy, Paddington Bear, and you'll find a bronze statue of Paddington Bear under the clock on platform 1. Next



door to Paddington is King's Cross station, where you can pose for a photo at Platform 9¾ from the Harry Potter movie fame.



*Figure 3. Paddington Station, London.*

The castle's history spans almost 1,000 years and still remains a working palace. We take time to visit the beautiful town of Windsor which is complete with numerous pubs, homey cafés, cobblestone streets, antiques, and souvenir shops.

We return to London in the late afternoon for some tour options. Choose from the Churchill War Rooms where Prime Minister Winston Churchill ran the war circa 1943-1945. The War Rooms have been left in much the same condition as they were in at the end of the war. (Around \$25).

Or, take in a visit to the world-renowned British Museum with its collection of over eight million objects! Be sure to see the Roman exhibitions, the Rosetta Stone, the Greek Parthenon 'Marbles', and the Egyptian Mummies. Entrance to the museum is **free**, but there is a suggested donation of five pounds, (\$6).

Or, you may want to consider taking a ride on the London Eye. (Around \$25). At 450 feet tall it's a remarkable feat of design and engineering, and affords some fantastic views of the Houses of Parliament from across the River Thames. It's a fifteen-minute walk from the National Portrait Gallery, which is free!

Or visit the most famous crosswalk in the world on Abbey Road, where in 1969 the Beatles posed for their now famous cover of the album bearing the same name. Easy to reach, and **free of charge**. We'll take you there!

We'll have our supper at the Euston Flyer pub, situated right next door to our hotel, then it's optional; head back to the room, or take in a stroll of the area in search of another local pub.

**Day 5:** After an early breakfast we travel by train for the ninety-minute journey to Salisbury where we connect for a short bus trip to Stonehenge. An archaeological marvel, and a UNESCO World Heritage site, we'll admire the 3,500- year-old structure. The site limits viewing to thirty minutes during peak times, but there's plenty of time for photo opportunities and a visit to the gift shop.

Back in Salisbury, there's time to explore Salisbury Cathedral, dating from 1220, and housing the oldest working clock dating circa 1386.

We'll grab a late lunch at the Haunch of Venison pub, dating from the mid-1300's and probably the oldest hostelry in Salisbury, and certainly the most haunted. The enormous oak beams, which can be seen throughout, pre-date the building by several hundred years and are thought to have come from early sailing vessels.



*Figure 4. Day 5 - Stonehenge, Wiltshire.*

The Haunch of Venison is a must-see place in Salisbury, listed on the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA)'s National Inventory for its historic interior and recommended by the Good Pub Guide for 28 years. It has a Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence for three years, and is published in many guide books and other tourist publications. Also, it proudly stands in a list of 25 Pubs in the UK you must drink in before you die! But hey, that's another tour...

Once back in London there's plenty of time for you to explore on your own if you wish, or your guides are available to join you. Maybe you visit Harrods, where you'll find seven floors and 330 departments showcasing the best of luxury merchandise. You'll find 28 restaurants serving quality food at exorbitant prices. Enjoy the Food Hall, a must-see if you visit Harrods.

If Harrod's is not your gig, we suggest a walking tour with our favorite tour company known as "London Walks". Just check their brochure for a list of tours.

We'll have a brochure available for you. Most walks start at 7:00p.m. and usually finish in a pub about 9:00 p.m.

The "London Walks" company is regarded as one of the best in London, with commentary from expert guides along the way. Their "Jack the Ripper" and "Haunted Pubs of London" tours being two of their most popular.

**Day 6:** After our hotel breakfast we travel from King's Cross/St. Pancras train station for the two-hour journey to the city of York in northeast England.

York is like nowhere else in northern England; its medieval streets are rich with history. If you're in search of cobbled streets, quaint tearooms, Gothic buildings and evidence of a slightly murky history, this is the city for you.

York's City Walls were built in the 13th century and are the longest town walls in the whole of England, offering a two-mile, predominantly elevated route around the historic city. It takes around two hours to walk around the complete route, taking in impressive views of the medieval buildings, river and ramparts.



*Figure 5. Day 6 - York Minister.*

If you're interested in locomotives, there's no better destination than York. The National Railway Museum has its home here, displaying over a million different objects related to the history of the railway. There's an impressive collection of trains and related paraphernalia, including the only Japanese Bullet Train outside of Japan.

There are so many pubs in York that it would be impossible to try them all during one trip! Scattered all across the city center you will find an array of traditional pubs dating back to 1644. We'll grab a hot meal in one of the pubs.

Probably the most famous place in York, the Shambles is one of the best-preserved medieval streets in the entire world. The street is part of the rabbit's



warren of narrow, twisting cobbled lanes in the city with most of the buildings dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries. The street is so narrow that when walking down the lane it is possible to stretch out your arms and touch the buildings on both sides.

York Minster is one of the largest cathedrals in England and Northern Europe. The history of this magnificent edifice dates back to the 4th century, and ever since then, it has played a major role in the religious and political life of the people. The first building for the church was made out of a wooden structure. This was in the year 627, and the reason for the quick construction is to provide a place for Edwin, king of Northumbria, to be baptized. After that, it wasn't until another 252 years passed before the cathedral reached completion.



Figure 6. Historic Bath Abby.

Bath Abbey was founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and rebuilt in both the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. You can climb the 212 steps to the top of Bath Abbey Tower. Or, visit the Jane Austen Center to delve into the life of one of Britain's favorite authors. There are plenty of restaurants, shops, and pubs to explore here too. See "The Crescent", a somewhat earlier version of a row of elegant townhouses.

Later you can concentrate on the real reason for your visit to this city and one of the finest historical experiences in Europe – the beautiful Roman baths. These glorious ruins transport you back down the centuries, and paired with excellent museum displays, the baths make for a wondrous experience with plenty to learn. A magical day out.

**Day 8:** After our hotel breakfast we take a twenty-minute boat ride down the Thames River departing from the Tower of London and ending at Greenwich. (If

**Day 7:** After our hotel breakfast we travel via Tube to London Paddington station, then board a train for the ninety-minute ride to the town of Bath, where we visit the ancient Roman baths. Bath became a noted Roman Spa town circa 60 AD.



feeling less adventurous you can take an Underground train). This is where East meets West. Straddle the Prime Meridian line and be in both the Eastern and Western Hemisphere at the same time. Climb aboard the Cutty Sark, the world's last surviving tea clipper, which was built at the end of the golden age of sail.

We visit the Royal Observatory and explore how great scientists first mapped the seas and the stars. See the Great Equatorial Telescope, the U.K.'s largest historic telescope which gave astronomers new views of the universe over 100 years ago.

We head back to the hotel in the afternoon. Now is the time to get our suitcases packed for the trip back to the USA tomorrow.

**Day 9:** We get an early start to take the Tube from St. Pancras station to Heathrow airport for our 10:30 a.m. return flight to Chicago. We'll be back in Des Moines around 5pm (CST).

### **Pubs**

Depending on how you define London's boundaries, there are believed to be as many as 7,000 pubs in the sprawling city. That's a whole lot of places to get a proper pint, so we've focused on some standouts with a timeless atmosphere rather than trendy gastropubs and craft-beer bars. (We visit the first three as part of our tour, the remaining thirteen listed can be visited if time allows and there's enough interest).

**The Sherlock Holmes: (St. James)** The Sherlock Holmes pub is a traditional English pub. As well as a bar and restaurant, the pub has a secret - a complete recreation of Holmes and Watson's study and sitting room with a large collection of objects and photographs related to the characters from the books and adaptations. The collection was put together for the Festival of Great Britain and moved to this permanent home at the Sherlock Holmes pub in 1957.

**Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese:** You can't turn around in London without bumping into a centuries-old pub, but Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese has a certain well-worn patina that not many can match. A pub has stood on the spot since 1538 (though it required substantial rebuilding after the Great Fire of London in 1666) and the vaulted cellars below date back to the 13th century. Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese has become a city landmark, but hasn't lost any of its charm. There's a list of every English monarch who has ruled since 1667 beside the door (Charles II was on the throne at the time) and a host of illustrious writers is said to have frequented this

London institution at one point or another. There is more than one pub with the “Cheshire Cheese” moniker, so we’re sure to visit the original at 145 Fleet Street.

**The Mayflower:** In July 1620, the Mayflower ship took on board 65 passengers from its London homeport of Rotherhithe on the River Thames. Rumor has it that Captain Christopher Jones cunningly moored here to avoid paying taxes further down the river. The Mayflower journeyed onwards to Southampton for supplies and to rendezvous with the Speedwell but after many delays, false starts and a devastating leak, the Speedwell’s journey with The Mayflower was abandoned. On 6th September, 1620, Captain Jones, along with 102 passengers and approximately 30 crew members, set sail from Plymouth on what William Bradford described as “a prosperous wind”.

**The Prospect of Whitby:** This is a historic pub on the banks of the Thames at Wapping in London. It lays claim to being the site of the oldest riverside tavern, dating from around 1520! In the old times it was a meeting place for sailors, smugglers, cut-throats and pirates. The pub is situated next to the former Wapping Execution Dock. Criminals (generally pirates) were hanged there!

**The Blackfriar:** Set in a historic, Art Nouveau Grade II masterpiece of a building, The Blackfriar was built in 1875 on the site of a Dominican friary. The building was designed by architect H. Fuller-Clark and artist Henry Poole, who were both committed to the free-thinking arts and crafts movement. Today, you’ll still find Poole’s original jolly friars around the pub, in the form of sculptures, mosaics, and reliefs.

**Lamb & Flag: (Covent Garden)** Tucked in a back alley, Lamb & Flag is the kind of place you'll find only if you're already looking for it. Despite its proximity to the crowded, though still charming, Covent Garden, this pub is refreshingly kitsch-free and has stood on the same site since 1772, and counted Charles Dickens as one of its regulars. You'll likely have to politely shove your way to the bar, but the centuries-old wall hangings, worn wooden bar, and authentic charm make Lamb & Flag well worth a visit.



*Figure 7: The Spaniard's Inn, Hampstead.*

**The Spaniard's Inn (Figure 7):** The trek to this Hampstead pub can feel like quite a journey, but it doesn't get much more atmospheric than this. Originally built as a tollbooth at the entrance to the Bishop of London's estate, The Spaniards Inn is awash in dark oak paneling, lit by a seemingly dangerous open fire in one corner. The pub also has a long literary history; the wooden bench outside proudly declares "Keats enjoyed many an Ale here," and Spaniards is mentioned in both *Dracula* and *The Pickwick Papers*.

**The Flask (Figure 8):** The Flask can be something of a mind-bender, no matter how much or how little you've had to drink; with two separate entrances and two bars that have no interior connection, finding your way around this historic space can be a bit of a challenge. The Flask has maintained its original charm.



*Figure 8: The Flask, Highgate.*

**The Churchill Arms (Figure 9):** Of all the pubs in London, The Churchill Arms may have the most distinctive look. Coming down Kensington Church Street, you'll be able to spot this Notting Hill institution from several blocks away with its floral-covered façade and regal, tiered structure. Once inside, be careful not to knock over any of the hundreds of knickknacks (and a striking amount of Winston Churchill memorabilia) hanging from the walls and ceiling. Ironically, the pub named after the great British leader is in fact an Irish establishment and to add more confusion to the mix, The Churchill Arms houses an unusually good Thai restaurant in the back.



*Figure 9: The fantastic Churchill Arms in Notting Hill.*

**The George Inn (Figure 10):** A map of London from circa 1543 indicates that the “Gorge” stood on the spot where The George Inn stands today, and though the pub was rebuilt after the London fire, it traces its roots back to medieval times. The final remaining galleried coaching inn in London, the pub boasts two spacious interior rooms in addition to the Oktoberfest-style lines of picnic tables in the courtyard.



*Figure 10: The George, Southwark.*



**Ye Olde Mitre (Figure 11):** Even when sober, finding Ye Olde Mitre can be a bit of a challenge, hidden down a narrow passageway on Ely Court off Holborn. The tavern is wedged between St. Etheldreda's Church (one of the oldest Catholic churches in England) and Hatton Garden, and has become famous for the cherry tree that stands out front, which Queen Elizabeth I is said to have danced around.



*Figure 11: Ye Olde Mitre, Farringdon.*

**The Antelope:** Belgravia, Figure 12: Though found near Sloane Square, one of the most expensive parts of an already pricey city, The Antelope offers up a quintessential English pub atmosphere without emptying your pockets. To boot, the food is exceptional for a pub and the wood-paneled exterior looks particularly inviting on the otherwise quiet residential street.



*Figure 12. The Antelope.*

**The White Hart:** Waterloo, Figure 13: Tucked away on a quiet neighborhood street in a refreshingly tourist-free Southbank area, this single-room pub can get

crowded with the after-work set, but the endlessly cheery group of locals will more than make up for the lack of seating.



Figure 13. The White Heart.

**The Dog & Fox:** Wimbledon, Figure 14. Just 15 minutes by train from Waterloo station, Wimbledon feels miles from central London with its quiet High Street and wooded Wimbledon Common, where horseback riders, casual golfers, and wellie-clad dog-walkers all lend the park an almost stereotypical English vibe. Fitting of the small-town atmosphere, The Dog & Fox does double-duty as a pub and hotel, not a five-minute walk from the Common. In addition to the usual line-up of Young's beer, The Dog & Fox also features an extensive cocktail list, best enjoyed on the outdoor patio on a sunny day.



Figure 14. The Dog and Fox, Wimbledon.



**The Victoria:** Paddington, Figure 15: This area north of Hyde Park isn't the busiest corner of the city, which is part of what makes The Victoria so appealing. The menu features standard pub fair, but the food is a cut above what you'll normally find at the average London drinking hole. The cozy interior is exactly what you'd hope to find in an English pub, with intricate woodwork, antique-y light fixtures, and a fireplace surrounded by well-worn armchairs. Upstairs features a beautiful library, perfect for a quiet bite.



*Figure 15. The Victoria, Paddington.*

**The Crown & Anchor:** Brixton, Figure 16: Managing to maintain its traditional English vibe while offering a unique assortment of craft ales, The Crown & Anchor sees tweed suits and ironically clad hipsters come together under one roof. Beer is the star of the show here, but this South London pub doesn't lack in atmosphere either.



*Figure 16. The Crown & Anchor, Brixton.*

**Essentials needed:**

Valid Passport.

Current driver's license or i.d. card.

Bank or credit card with micro-chip.

Emergency contact list.

Mobile phone.

Small amount of English currency prior to departure.

Comfortable walking shoes.

Light jacket.

Compact umbrella and/or raincoat.

An open mind.

A healthy attitude.

A desire to have fun.