

Lining up: 11 lines now make up London's famous Underground network

What's in a name?

The London Tube map and its 11 coloured lines and patterns are recognised by people all over the world.

THE network covers 250 miles (402km) in the capital, serves 270 stations and is the oldest underground railway in the world.

But how many of the 4.8million passengers who use the Tube every day know how the lines got their names? MetroTravel has been finding out.

Bakerloo

The brown Tube line opened in 1906 and was originally called the Baker Street & Waterloo Railway because of the two areas of London it linked. Within months, however, it was being referred to as the Bakerloo line - and the name stuck.

The original stations have a distinctive look, with those underground having typical art nouveau decorative tiling and distinctive ox-blood red tiled façades.

Central

Opening in 1900, the red line is a deep underground railway originally known as the Central London Railway. It is the only Tube line to cross London from east to west, and runs directly under Oxford Street to the financial centre of the City.

It has 49 stations and the word 'London' was dropped from its name once the line was extended beyond the boundaries of the old County of London.

Circle

The yellow line runs for 17 miles, stops at 36 stations and follows the tracks of the Metropolitan, Hammersmith & City and District lines for much of its length.

It became a line in its own right in 1949.

District

The green line opened in 1868 as the Metropolitan District Railway, running between South Kensington and Westminster.

The original plan was to join the new line up with the Metropolitan Railway to form an 'inner circle' connecting London's mainline termini, but the two companies fell out and the link was not completed until 1884.

Hammersmith & City

The pink line links Hammersmith with the City of London so it's an obvious choice of name, even though it actually extends past the City to the East End.

Running for 15 miles and serving 29 stations, it was originally part of the Metropolitan line and only became a separate Tube line in 1990.

Jubilee

The silver Tube line is the newest on the network and commemorates the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977. However, the line from Stanmore to Charing Cross didn't actually open until 1979 and was extended to Stratford in 1999. It is 22 miles long and serves 27 stations.

Metropolitan

Opening in 1863, the magenta line was the first underground railway in the world. It originally ran between Paddington and Farringdon before being extended out to the suburbs of north-west London, which was then known as Metro-land. The line is now 42 miles long.

Northern

The black Tube line was originally two companies that merged together in the 1920s. It was named the Northern line in 1937, in preparation for the Elstree and Bushey extension that never happened.

Consequently the line does not serve London's most northern stations, but it does extend the furthest south (to Morden). It runs for 36 miles and has 50 stations, 36 of which have platforms below ground.

Piccadilly

The blue line was named after the famous London circus and comes from the word piccadill, which was a fashionable large lace collar worn in the 16th century. It opened in 1906 and originally ran from Finsbury Park to Hammersmith.

Victoria

The light-blue line opened in 1968 and was the first new Tube service to be introduced in half a century. It took its name from Victoria station, which had been named after Queen Victoria. Other suggestions at the time had included 'Walvic' (Walthamstow-Victoria) and 'Viking' (Victoria-King's Cross).

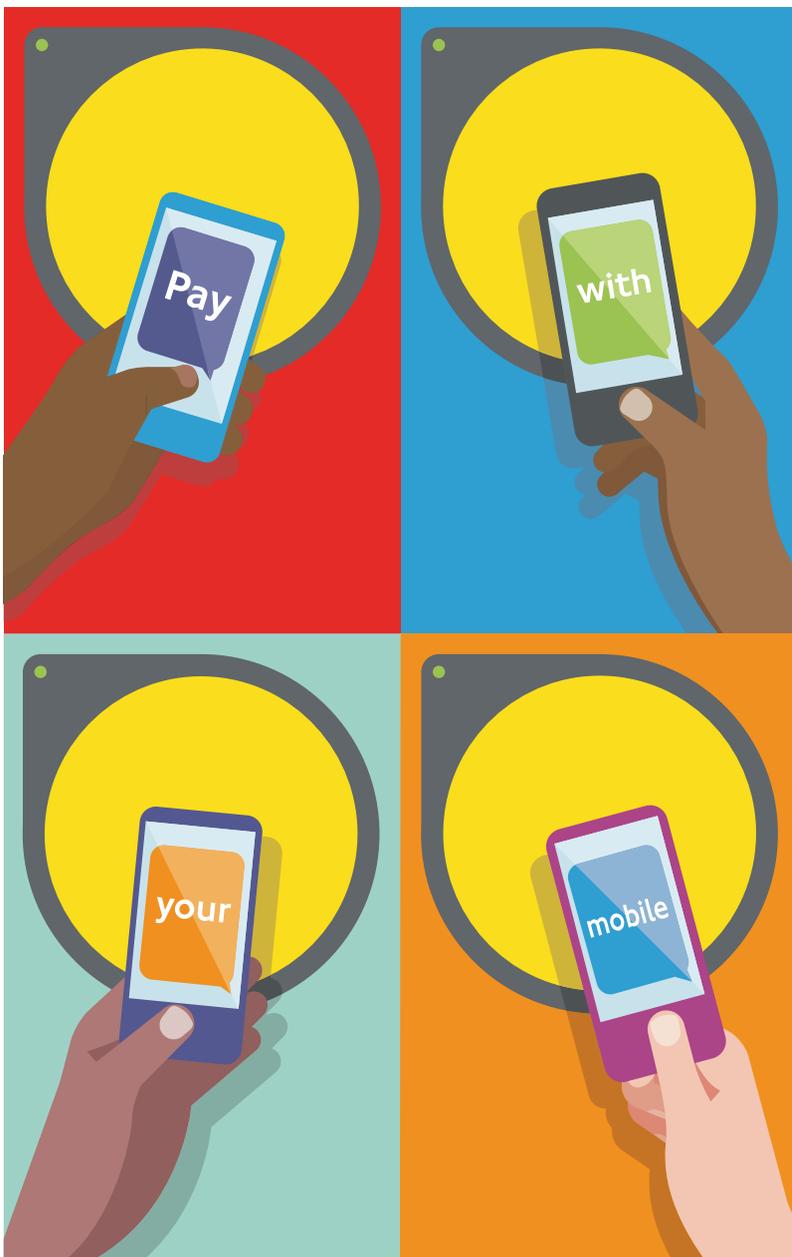
Waterloo & City

The turquoise line, or the 'Drain' as it is known, dates back to 1898 when the London & South Western Railway opened an underground line connecting Waterloo with the City of London. Originally a train line, it became part of London Underground in 1994 following the privatisation of British Rail.



A royal ride: Queen Elizabeth II takes a journey by Tube at the official opening of the Victoria line

Picture: Bippa



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