

Far from the maddening crowds



If you are heading to one of London's popular destinations, there are some alternative options to help you beat the hustle and bustle.

THE capital is spoilt for choice when it comes to shopping destinations, sightseeing spectaculars and cultural delights, but when you get there it can sometimes feel like the rest of London has had the same idea as you.

Tube stations cater for every type of travel, from the regular commute to the family day trip. One way of avoiding the crowds is to think about when you need to be at a location, and if possible, travelling outside the peak hours.

You can check your station's busiest times on the TfL website, which includes details of when they may still be crowded and when they will be less busy during peak hours.

Another option for finding a calmer oasis on the Underground network is to try alternative stations, which are often only slightly further than their busier counterparts.

Oxford Circus

Rather than battling through shoppers at Oxford Circus, nearby stations such as Tottenham Court Road or Bond Street, which recently had a £300m upgrade, could be less busy during peak hours.

Bond Street station (pictured) now has a 30 per cent bigger capacity, after the opening of a new entrance

and ticket hall in November. The station also provides step-free access for the first time, making it easier for passengers with accessibility needs or those with buggies or heavy shopping.

Bank

Another station that can be particularly busy, especially around the morning and evening rush hours, is Bank on the Central and Waterloo & City lines. Mansion House (Circle and District lines) is often quieter and is only a few minutes walk away.

Gunnersbury area

There has been significant development in the Gunnersbury area recently, which has seen more people using the Tube station during the morning peak. One option for District line passengers coming into or leaving the area could be to use Chiswick Park instead.

Victoria

Served by National Rail services as well as Circle, District and Victoria Tube lines, Victoria station is the third busiest in London. Nearby Pimlico station, which is also on the Victoria line, could be used instead by anyone looking to avoid the crowds.

Active travel

As we move towards spring and the promise of warmer weather, what better way to explore London than by bike or on foot?

There are more than 100 journeys between neighbouring Tube stations that could actually be quicker to walk.

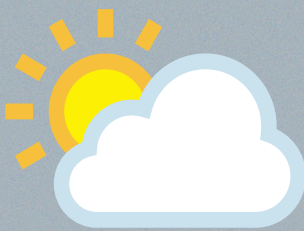
These include many popular journeys between stations on different lines, such as Charing Cross and Westminster, Covent Garden and Tottenham Court Road or Cannon Street and St. Paul's - all of which can be reached by walking in about ten minutes.

To help make it easier for pedestrians, there are a number of tools available from TfL, including a walking Tube map, which shows the time it takes to walk between stations.

Santander Cycles make it even easier to get around and avoid the rush and cost from as little as £2 a day for an unlimited number of 30-minute journeys. Simply go to any docking station with your bank card and touch the screen to get started - or download the Santander Cycles app.

■ **Remember to check before you travel. For help planning your journey, visit tfl.gov.uk/plan-a-journey**

Checking the weather?



Check your travel



Checking the weather will help you decide whether you need an umbrella or sunglasses.

Checking your journey could help you decide which route to take.

Search TfL Check your travel

Legible London

THERE are more than 1,700 Legible London street signs and maps, designed to help people find the best route to their destination. They provide information about walking routes and landmarks.

Many of the maps are located near Tube stations, at bus stops and Santander Cycles docking stations, so if you are trying a new route or avoiding certain stations, you will find useful hints to complete your journey.

The signs also feature circles showing which places can be reached within five or 15 minutes when walking at an average pace, making it even easier to find famous landmarks and attractions.



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