

Discover your secret city

For the latest feature in our series on essential journeys, MetroTravel looks at the best ways to find London's hidden sights and stories.

WHETHER you want to relax in a black cab or pedal across the capital, there are plenty of secret journeys and landmarks to discover.

Cycle the Secret Gardens route from Ladbroke Grove to Chelsea

The fitness benefits of cycling are much publicised, but exploring on two wheels can also unlock some of the many treasures that London has to offer. One of TfL's five Santander Cycles leisure routes, Secret Gardens offers riders a chance to appreciate a green, quirky and secret city – and also

takes in a well-known location from the romantic comedy Notting Hill.

Where do I start? If you are using a Santander Cycle, make your way to the Ladbroke Grove central docking station (the nearest Tube stations are Ladbroke Grove or Holland Park). There is a £2 fee for hiring the bike, and the first 30 minutes of each trip is free, with an additional charge of £2 per half hour for any journey lasting more than 30 minutes.

What should I be looking out for? Soon after pedalling away from Ladbroke Grove, you'll reach Rosmead Gardens. Although these are



private communal gardens, they are worth admiring while you cycle past as this was where Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant filmed a scene for the 1999 film Notting Hill. This route will take you to the Japanese garden in Holland Park, through Hyde Park, across the Serpentine Bridge, and past the Hyde Park Pet Cemetery. Continue on to the Chelsea Physic Garden, one of the oldest botanical gardens in Britain. Make sure you stick to the signed cycle routes and don't forget to dock your bike if you want to hop on and off to explore along the way.

Anything else I should know? There is a free Santander Cycles app available to download, which makes it easy to locate and hire a bike. You can also find inspiration about routes around the capital with the book, London on Two Wheels, which has maps, route information and tips on cycling safety and etiquette. The book costs £9.99 and is available from stores including

Amazon and Waterstones. For more routes, visit tfl.gov.uk/cycles

A black cab tour of the city

However long you have lived in the capital, you won't know the streets of London like a black cab driver does. It takes the average cabbie four years to study and sit the exams needed to pass the Knowledge, making them a brilliant source of information about places of interest to tourists.

For an unparalleled insight into the capital, hail the first black cab that passes and ask the driver to take you on a tour of the streets. Flag up any notable landmarks or areas of interest you'd like to cover during the journey, and the best part is that any ad-hoc commentary and anecdotes

during your trip will be included in the price of the fare. There are also many companies that offer black cab tours around London.

Where do I start? Begin your route somewhere central. Before you hop in,

it would probably be best to have a general idea of where you would like to go, and what you want to see. Alternatively, you could ask your driver to surprise you.

What should I be looking out for? Keep your eyes peeled for any sights as you go past.

Anything else

I should know? The black cab was recently voted London's leading transport design icon in a poll by Transported by Design.



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Step-free at South Tottenham

LONDON Overground's South Tottenham station has become the latest on the network to become step-free.

Two new lifts from the ticket hall to platform have been installed to provide step-free access as part of a £2.5million refurbishment programme.

When work is completed later this month, customers will benefit from a new entrance and bike stand area outside the

station. Further improvements will include upgraded CCTV and a new gateline.

A number of accessibility improvements have already been made across the London Overground and London Underground network. TfL has introduced manual boarding ramps and a turn-up-and-go service, wide-aisle gates, tactile paving and raised platform sections to give level access to the train.

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