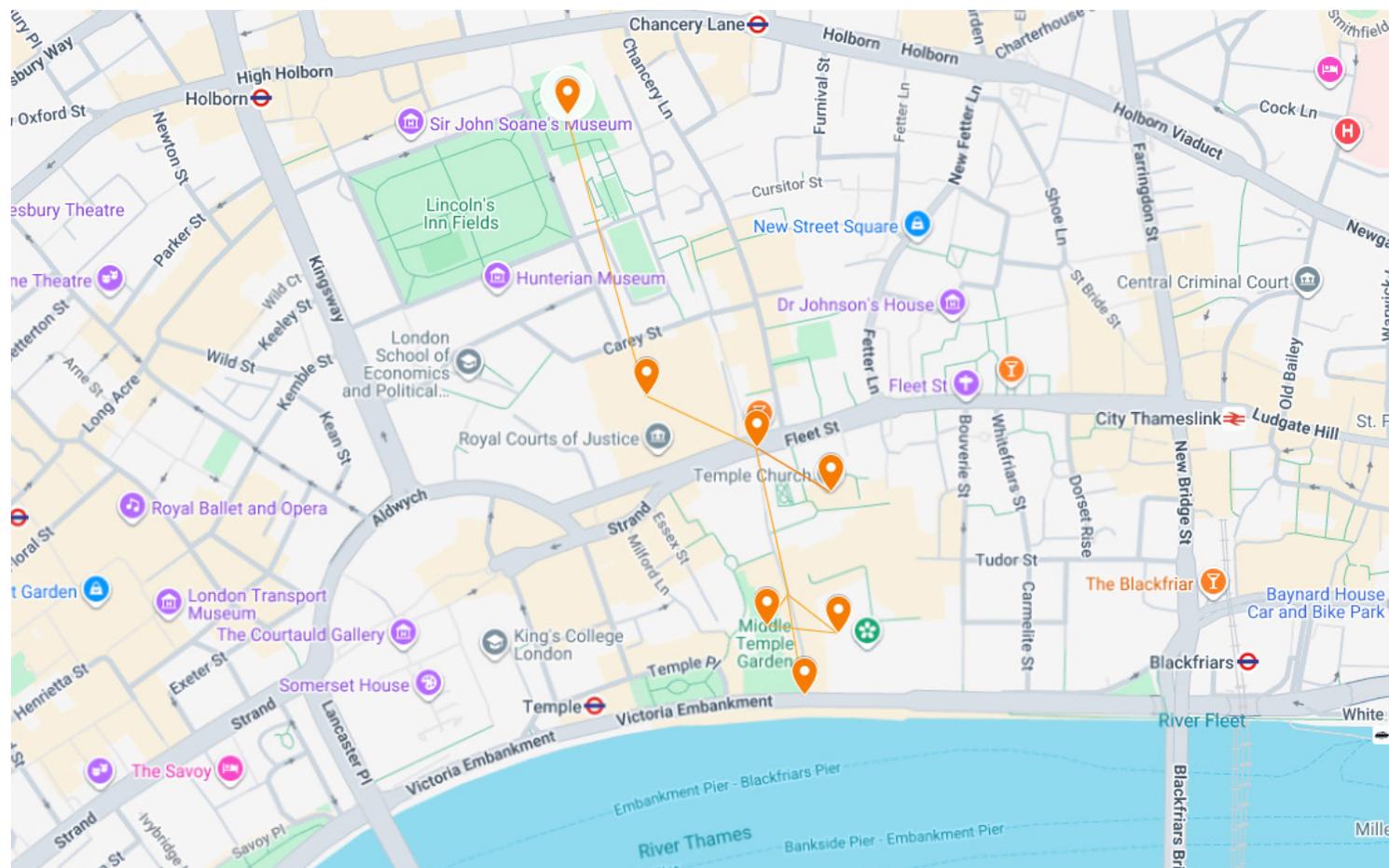


London legal quarter

Suggested photography walk



See the **orange** route in Google Maps (zoom in/out, etc):

[See map](#)

Timings

It all depends on how fast you walk, any detours you take, and how long you spend setting up your shots. If you were just going to walk it without stopping, it would take you 15 minutes. Allow about 1-1.5 hours?

This route takes in:

- Lincoln's Inn Fields
- Lincoln's Inn Gardens
- Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ)
- Middle Temple Lane
- Inner & Middle Temple gardens
- Temple Church

You might also want to add slight detours for:

- Sir John Soames' Museum, at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields (eccentric 19th-century collector's home, packed with classical sculpture, paintings and curiosities)
- A coffee or lunch before you get started at the [Pear Tree Café](#) in Lincoln's Inn Fields - open 8-4:30 every day but Sunday
- Listening to one or more court hearings for a bit - just out of interest

Tip: There are public toilets in the north-east corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields

A note about the legal quarter

There are solicitor's offices all over London but when it comes to going to court, you're going to need one or more barristers. And the best and/or longest-established barristers have their chambers closest to the courts – and that's the legal quarter.

This means that the area around the Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ), where Strand meets Fleet Street, is ancient and packed with legal offices. There is some **wonderful architecture** and it's a **quiet, peaceful oasis** with gardens and fountains and an old church hidden away.

If you want to add an extra dimension to your trip, time it for **when barristers are coming out of court and heading back to chambers**. This is probably going to be around 4pm. They won't be in gowns and wigs, but they will almost certainly be dressed in black – and will invariably be carrying pull-along suitcases containing all their files. They look a bit like funereal cabin crew. A group of them striding out, with their suitcases, chatting to each other, would probably make a great shot.

Nearest Tube to start this walk:

Holborn or Chancery Lane

About the four Inns of Court

Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple and Middle Temple are the four historic professional bodies responsible for calling barristers to the Bar of England and Wales. Collectively, they function as self-governing, independent institutions situated in central London around Holborn and the Temple.

Each inn is a self-contained precinct comprising:

- Chambers (barristers' offices)
- Gardens and squares
- Halls for dining
- Law libraries
- Residential accommodation (less common today, but still present)
- Historic chapels and churches (Temple Church serves Inner and Middle Temple)

This is a relatively private and very professional area – so obviously, not everything is open to the public. Also, the gardens sometimes host private events. The following pages have all been checked carefully, but double-check opening hours online before your own walk. And before walking through any gates, double-check it's OK to go in (explain that you're not doing *commercial* photography).

This walk takes in 3 of the 4 inns.

As you pass through the whole area, look out for signs on buildings indicating barristers' chambers (they should list all of the members outside – can often be over 100!) or the offices of independent KCs (kings' counsels - the most senior barristers).

If you also want to see **Gray's Inn**, it's a short walk NORTH of this walk's starting point. Before you get started, just head up onto High Holborn, turn right, then left again into Gray's Inn Road. It's on your left. There are gardens at Gray's Inn, but access is limited according to time of day and season, so check at the gate.

Legal quarter

Let's get started!

North Lawn Gardens Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn Architecture + gardens

The gardens of Lincoln's Inn provide a tranquil oasis for its members, residents, 'tenants' (barristers), as well as the general public. The 11-acre site contains a parkland as well as smaller ornamental areas such as the beautifully composed Kitchen Garden, just off New Square. The estate's pedestrian entrances on Chancery Lane and Carey Street are open to the public 8am-7pm Monday to Friday.

The first garden to be recorded at the Inn was the Long Garden, to the North of the Inn's quadrangle of buildings. This was a kitchen garden, used in 1445 by cook Richard Bennett to produce food for the Inn.



© Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

Lincoln's Inn Fields Lincoln's Inn (one of the 4 inns) Park

Pop over the road and into this large park with the high-quality Pear Tree Café within it. Lining the square are legal offices (for solicitors as well as barristers' chambers) so look out for lovely architecture. Perhaps take a pocketful of peanuts for the squirrels and birds.



Image: Google Maps

Royal Courts of Justice (RCJ)

Exit the park at its south end, onto Carey Street. You'll now be at the *back* of the RCJ, which occupies a whole block (also incorporating Central London County Court). Part of the back side is the National Justice Museum. It's worth walking all the way around the courts block – the architecture is wonderful. You'll recognise the *front* of the RCJ, on Strand, from so much TV footage.

The Royal Courts of Justice are open to the public on weekdays during normal court hours. Visitors may enter the main building and walk through the public corridors. And since justice is intended to be transparent, and must be seen to be done, most civil and family hearings in the RCJ are open to the public (unless a judge specifically orders otherwise). You may sit in the public gallery and quietly observe proceedings. Airport-style security checks apply at the entrance. Large bags are prohibited, as are ALL photography and filming.



Image: [David Castor at Wikipedia](#)

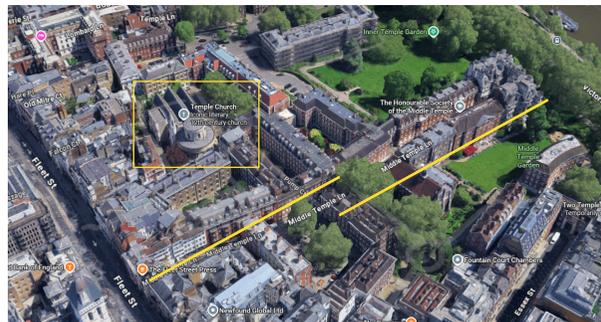
Middle Temple Lane, EC4Y 9AT

With your back to the RCJ's front entrance on Strand, turn left slightly and then cross the road.

Walk down Middle Temple Lane – a 24-hour pedestrian alley - ancient and quite smart

Half-way down, the lane widens out and offers access to 2 more of the 4 historic inns of court - Middle Temple and Inner Temple –and their gardens

If you were to keep walking instead of turning into the gardens, you'd pop out on Embankment.



Middle Temple Lane takes you from Fleet St down to the river

Image: Google Maps

Inner Temple Garden & Middle Temple Gardens

Wander through both sets of gardens and enjoy the atmosphere and the surrounding architecture as much as anything. Don't miss Fountain Court, with its... fountain.



Image: Fountain Court Chambers

Finish your walk by heading to the bottom of Middle Temple Lane, where you'll emerge onto Embankment. Just to your right will be HMS Wellington, and just past that is Temple Tube Station. Just past *that* is Waterloo Bridge.

Temple Church

Admission £5. Consecrated in 1185, the church serves the legal colleges Inner and Middle Temple. Magna Carta was negotiated here, and it was the birthplace of American law. Beautiful and unusual interior. The church is a bit hidden away and access can be a bit tricky:

- **From Middle Temple Lane** (mentioned in the left-hand column on this page, find Kings Bench Walk and head through the entryway in Francis Taylor Building.
- Access the church directly via **Inner Temple Lane** (runs parallel to Middle Temple Lane, mentioned in the left-hand column on this page). It's off Fleet Street, on the opposite side to Chancery Lane.
- **From Tudor Street:** During restricted hours (after 8:30pm on weekdays and all day on weekends), turn right when you enter The Temple, cross the car park diagonally, and cross the covered passage next to the library.



Image: Google Maps