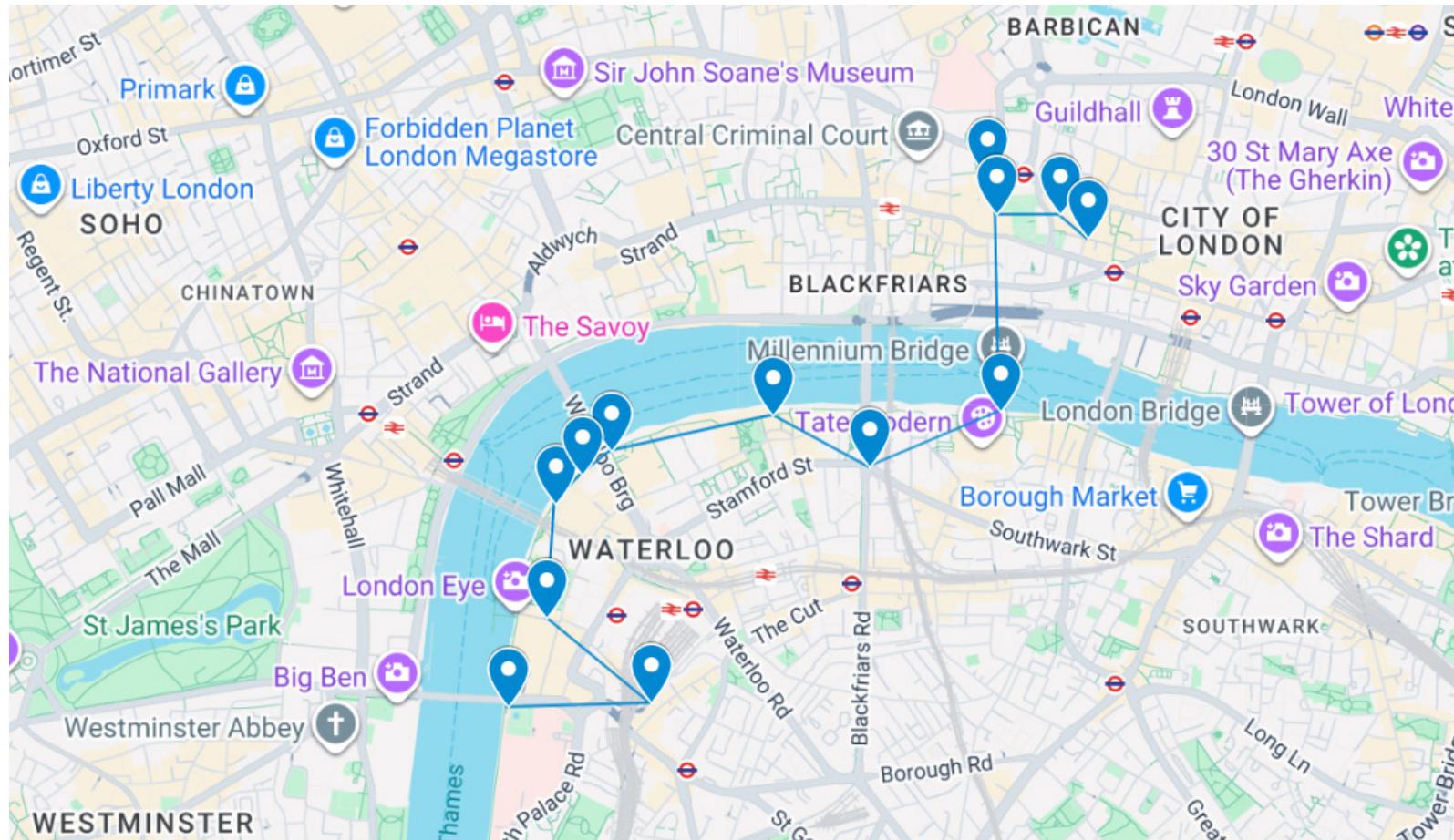


Westminster Bridge to St Paul's (along the South Bank)



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

[See map](#)

Timings

This is one of the longer walks but it all depends on how fast you walk, any detours you take, and how long you spend setting up your shots – allow 4 hours?

This route takes in:

- Views of Westminster Palace & Big Ben
- Leake St Arches graffiti tunnel
- London Eye area
- Views from Hungerford Bridge and Golden Jubilee Bridges
- Brutalist architecture + the urban skate park
- Street photography opportunities along South Bank
- Oxo Tower
- Tall buildings spot
- Tate Modern & Turbine Hall
- Millennium (wobbly) Bridge
- Close angles on St Paul's
- Paternoster Square
- Christchurch Greyfriars Church Garden

let's get started!

Westminster Bridge

Start on the south side of the river, but go down the steps to river level. You get great views of the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben one way, along with the bridge struts, and the London Eye and South Bank from the right-hand side.



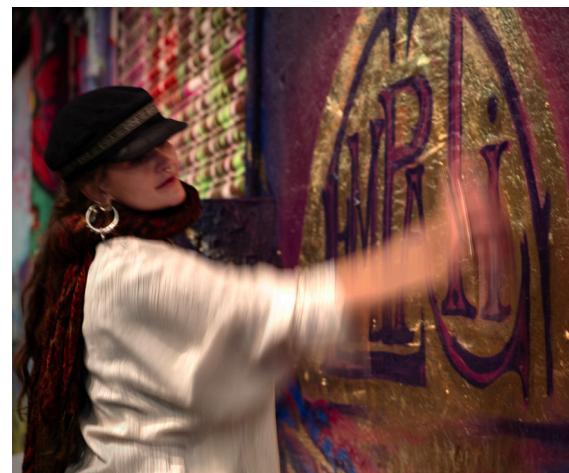
Photo credit: [Michael Soliterman](#)

Leake St Arches graffiti tunnel

From the bridge steps, head straight along the bridge road – away from Parliament – towards the Park Plaza Hotel (kinda cylindrical/triangular) and turn left just before you get to it. Walk along York Road and take the 2nd right into Leake Street - you'll see the entrance to the tunnel. Or use the What3Words location [///ducks.dwell.unless](https://what3words.com/duck.dwell.unless)

The tunnel is a vibrant cultural hub – a 300-metre legal canvas for street art beneath Waterloo Station. It feels pretty safe/welcoming.

If you love street photography, prepare to spend a couple of hours here. If you're not into street, go anyway and spend half an hour getting out of your comfort zone – you won't regret it!



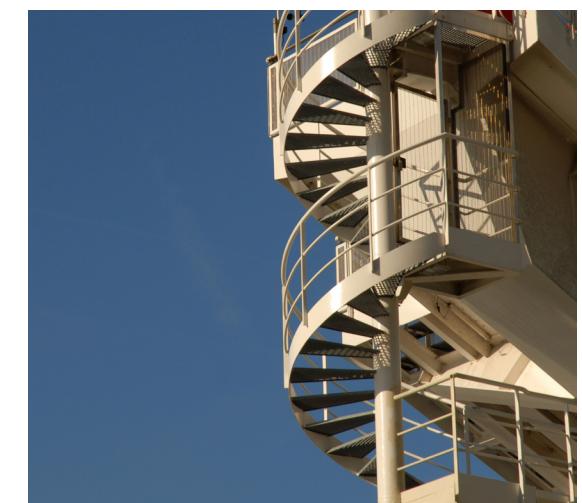
There's an exit at the far end, but for this route it's best to come back out where you went in.

London Eye area

From the tunnel entrance, head back to the river and the area around the London Eye. Lots of photo opportunities for the Eye itself, people, and the surrounding architecture, as well as the river and its traffic. There are often street entertainers along this stretch.

If you want to take photos from the top of the Eye, standard tickets are £29 and you should buy in advance - any walk-up tickets available will be about £10 more expensive.

For a less common view of the Eye, back away along the pedestrian passageway alongside Jubilee Gardens towards Belvedere Road. There's a small avenue of trees and you get a good shot along the avenue towards the Eye.



Along the South Bank (Queen's Walk)

Loads happens along here – both fleeting and permanent. As you head along Queen's Walk, look out for the Southbank Food Market, the Golden Carousel, street entertainers and loads of candid portrait/street opportunities, as well as river traffic.



Hungerford & Golden Jubilee Bridges

The bridges don't take road vehicles, just trains – but there are pedestrian walkways. You might want to head half-way across to get 'middle of the river' shots, including towards Charing Cross Station on the other side. Great at dawn/dusk, with the lights of London, slow/smoothing shots of the water, and motion-blur shots of boats etc.



Brutalist architecture & skate park

Pass the Hungerford & Golden Jubilee Bridges and continue along Queen's Walk. Either side of Waterloo Bridge, you'll find the icons of Brutalist architecture: before the bridge, the Royal Festival Hall & Southbank Centre and the Queen Elizabeth Hall (with the Hayward Gallery just behind), and the National Theatre on the other side of the bridge. If you're ready for a cuppa or snack by now, there are cafés within – and the Southbank Centre has a (low) roof terrace.

If you're really into this sort of thing, walk all the way around the buildings – don't just take in the views from the front. There are some surprisingly sheer drops of concrete, with entrances on different aspects.

The iconic **skatepark** is under the QE Hall, known for its ledges, stairs and graffiti.



Street photography opportunities

As you continue along Queen's Walk, depending on the tide, you might want to pop down to

Thames Beach for low-angle shots of the river, or of people collecting for artefacts.

Just opposite the beach is **Gabriel's Wharf**, a small open-air market and food outlets. It'll be closing in autumn 2026 for demolition and redevelopment, so catch it while it's still there.

Oxo Tower

Originally a power station, this huge building with its iconic square tower has design and arts & crafts shops on the ground and first floors, plus 2 art galleries. There are a bar and restaurants on the 8th floor, which is the roof-top so there's also a **viewing gallery** open to the public.



Photo: [HereBeBeasties](#) via Wikipedia

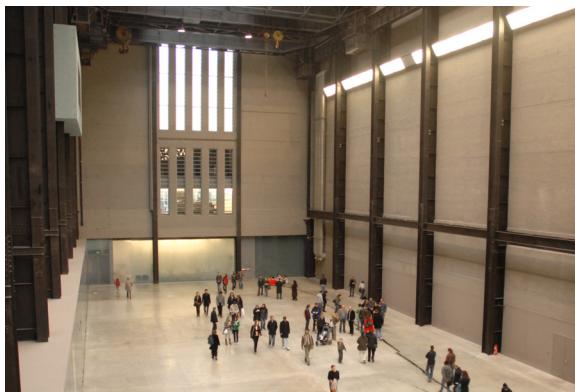
Tall buildings spot

Continue along Queen's Walk to Blackfriars Bridge, then turn right and head to the traffic lights. Around this area there are opportunities for some great shots of highly reflective tall buildings.

Tate Modern & Turbine Hall

Head back along Queen's Walk as far as the Tate Modern, where you might want to go in and take photos – especially of the huge Turbine Hall with its amazing windows.

Guidance: *"You **can** take photos inside Tate Modern for personal, non-commercial use, but you must avoid using flash, selfie sticks, and tripods, and always be considerate of other visitors, asking for consent before photographing people. Photography is generally allowed in main galleries unless artwork labels specify otherwise, but always check for specific restrictions on temporary exhibitions."*



Millennium ('Wobbly') Bridge

All the iconic shots you've ever seen of the view across to St Pauls are here for the taking. Dawn, dusk and night (and super-slow shutter speeds) may get rid of the crowds, or make the most of the crowds for some motion-blur shots.



Image: Gordon Buckley

If you have the time and the inclination, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre is a short detour just past the bridge.

St Paul's Cathedral

Head over the bridge to St Paul's where are some opportunities to take more unusual shots:

- Watling Street is a narrow road to the east of St Paul's with a glass-covered building on the right, offering great reflections. The enclosed (and rather dark) street opens up onto St Pauls', so if you're clever with your lighting you can get great shots. If it's rained, get down low to see St Paul's reflected in puddles.
- One New Change is a shopping centre at the top of Watling St where it meets New Change, to the rear of St Paul's. There are photography opportunities from the ground floor or various levels of the shopping centre where the windows look out over the cathedral. Or take the lift up to the top, where there's a roof terrace and you can get something to drink, with amazing views across Saint Paul's.

If you can cope with heights, claustrophobia, the 528 steps and the St Paul's entrance fee (about £26!), go up to the very top of the dome - the exterior Golden Gallery. You'll have breathtaking panoramic views of London – the Shard, Tate Modern, the Gherkin, the Globe Theatre etc.

Paternoster Square

Formerly a meat market and destroyed in The Blitz, the square is now home to the London Stock Exchange and several investment banks. Look out for public art including:

- The 75-feet-tall Paternoster Square Column, illuminated at night by fibre-optic lighting
- The Shepherd and Sheep
- The Paternoster Vents (modern, angular)

The square seems to have a beguiling atmosphere at night.



Christchurch Greyfriars Church Garden

On the site of a Franciscan church established in 1225 and destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. A new church, designed by Wren, was completed in 1704, but it was bombed in 1940 and only the west tower still stands. In 1989, a rose garden was installed, recreating the floor plan of the original church with box-edged beds representing the original position of the pews and wooden towers representing the stone columns of the former church.



Image: Diego Delso, delso.photo, License CC BY-SA