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# LONDON PLANNER

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NOV 19 • LONDONPLANNER.COM

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From Chinatown  
to Brick Lane

## THE KING OF KINGS

It's the grand opening of Tutankhamun:  
Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TUTANKHAMUN: TREASURES OF THE GOLDEN PHARAOH PRESENTED BY VIKING CRUISES

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# The Mayor's letter

## Welcome to London this November

Begin your adventure by exploring *Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh* at the Saatchi Gallery (from 2 Nov), which marks the centenary of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb.

On 3 Nov, Trafalgar Square hosts Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, with an exciting line-up of music and dance.

Cheer on the Lionesses, who return to Wembley Stadium on 9 Nov for the first time since the Women's Football World Cup.

For those who want to experience a modern-day picture of life in London, I recommend Oscar-winning director and artist Steve McQueen's Year 3 project at Tate Britain. This is a refreshing take on the traditional school photo, as he brings together 1,500 London primary-school class photographs in one exhibition.

Finally, if you're here from 21 Nov, enjoy Hyde Park Winter Wonderland. This is London's biggest Christmas market, with rides, shows, ice sculptures and attractions, too.

However you spend your time, have a wonderful experience.

**Sadiq Khan**

Mayor of London



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# Everyone's welcome

From cockneys to hipsters, London is packed with all sorts of groups. **Neil Simpson** finds out how certain communities have built a home away from home



The Lion sculpture on Wardour Street



## JEWISH

Approximately 55,000 Jewish people live in Barnet. Why did one fifth of the

Jewish population of England and Wales settle in this north London borough? We ask the Jewish Museum's collections manager and curator, Kathrin Pieren.

'Members of the Jewish community in Barnet originally settled along the Northern line in the 1920s – there was a lot of housing development along the railway line, with people migrating from the East End as they became better off.

'The biggest movement away from the East End was probably after World War II. The area was bombarded because of the port and the concentration of industry there. As more people settled, synagogues and Jewish



Tailor in the East End

schools made the borough attractive for Jewish people.

'I like the story of the *King of Lampedusa*: it's a Yiddish play based on the true story of Sydney Cohen, a Jewish tailor from Clapton [east London] who became an RAF flight sergeant. His forced landing on the Italian island of Lampedusa caused the Italian garrison to surrender, earning Sydney the nickname 'King of Lampedusa'. The play was staged at east London's Grand Palais Theatre in 1943 and we have a poster of it in our museum.' [www.jewishmuseum.org.uk](http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk)







Jewish  
Museum

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PRINCESS DIANA IN CHINATOWN LONDON © PRINCESS DIANA COURTESY OF WWW.CCC.ORG.UK; INTERVIEWEES  
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## CHINESE

Parallel to the bright lights of Shaftesbury Avenue, China Exchange on Soho's Gerrard Street works to promote China's impact on the world. CEO Freya Aitken-Turff reveals the story of this community:

'London's original Chinese community were sailors, working in the Docklands in the late 1800s. With British Naval forces caught up in the Napoleonic Wars, a small but impactful Chinese community of about 300 households formed in Limehouse. However, heavy World War II bombing made it unsafe.

'From the 1700s, Soho had a reputation for multiculturalism. After the war, Londoners became more willing to try Chinese and other foreign food. There were a couple of Chinese businesses established in Gerrard Street and so, as the Limehouse community was displaced and more people migrated from Hong Kong, many settled there.

'During the 1970s, the number of Chinese businesses increased



Princess Diana in  
Chinatown in 1985



dramatically, from four or five in the 1970s to about 40 by 1979. In 1985, Westminster began working with the community to formally establish Chinatown, installing its gates of welcome and stone lions.'

To find out more, join China Exchange's monthly walking tour (23 Nov; £27). Led by a community-trained history champion, it includes a classic Chinatown lunch.

[www.chinaexchange.uk](http://www.chinaexchange.uk);  
[www.ccc.org.uk](http://www.ccc.org.uk) ▶



## HUGUENOTS

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the world came to east London's Spitalfields district to buy silk woven by a community of French Protestants, the Huguenots. The local attraction Dennis Severs' House exists as a reminder of that era, so we interviewed its curator David Milne.

'When London was a walled city its rules were strict, so immigrants settled outside; the first Huguenot settlers came to Spitalfields when the area was demarcated the Liberty of Norton Folgate. France became a Catholic country and more persecuted Huguenots arrived. Instinctively, we all follow where our own kind have gone and many spoke French here – it was the first language on the streets – hence Fournier Street, Fleur de Lis Street and all of Spitalfields' French-sounding names.

'They became prosperous and the Spitalfields' silk industry world-renowned. There were 17,000 looms at work in a neighbourhood that was three times the size that it is today and even Marie Antoinette ordered silk from Spitalfields. There was a chap here called James Leman who made sensational designs.



I'm slightly obsessed with him because he made such an impact on London and then seemed to vanish: you can't find him, only his designs. A room dedicated to Spitalfields at the V&A includes examples of his work.'

Spitalfields' townhouse, Dennis Severs' House, is getting ready for its *Christmas Installation* (from 24 Nov). The late American artist Severs devised this tour that takes visitors through time, from the early 1700s to a Victorian-style Yuletide. [www.dennissevershouse.co.uk](http://www.dennissevershouse.co.uk) ►



## BANGLADESHI

Brick Lane in east London is home to a mind-boggling array of Bangladeshi restaurants. It's also where writer Kia Abdullah grew up. She explains to us how this vibrant community took root:

'The borough of Tower Hamlets has a long tradition of welcoming immigrant populations. Bangladeshis came to London in the 1950-1960s and in greater numbers in the 1970s, in search of employment and stability. The East End's thriving clothing industry offered work in the textile trade as cutters, machinists, pressers and finishers. With their new-found capital, some of these workers opened cafés. From there grew the large network of successful Bangladeshi restaurants and shops that we see in and around Brick Lane today.

'In east London, it can seem like people from different communities live separate lives that rarely cross over. However, everyone speaks the language of haggling: my mother speaks very little English but I've seen her expertly negotiate with a white-British stallholder. Bangladeshi women of her generation are extremely resourceful: they will purchase the freshest fish for close to pennies, purely through the arch of an eyebrow or a creasing of the lips. The non-verbal language of gestures and miming is very much part of the fabric of this city.

'There is so much to see in Tower Hamlets. I recommend visiting Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, one of London's "magnificent seven" cemeteries built in early Victorian times. Burials ceased in 1966 and today, the 30 acres of woodland are managed as a nature park.

'If you're after something traditionally Bangladeshi, I would suggest Café Grill on Brick Lane. It's no-frills in terms of decor, but offers authentic food at affordable prices.'



Mela Festival in Bethnal Green



Kia and her family



Brick Lane restaurant

St Katharine Docks



A travel writer and novelist, Kia's new book is entitled *Take It Back*. The story is a courtroom drama set in east London – ideal if you're looking for a book that will immerse you in the city. [www.kiaabdullah.com](http://www.kiaabdullah.com)

## CAPTURING LONDON

To understand London's diversity, visit *Steve McQueen Year 3 at Tate Britain* (from 12 Nov). This free exhibition was masterminded by the Londoner and film director (*12 Years a Slave*), who offered every Year 3 pupil in London – that's 115,000 – the chance to be photographed with their class by the Tate. Seven-year-olds are at a stage in their development when they become aware of the world beyond their family, so McQueen aims to capture this and depict London's next generation. It's a chance to consider the forces that shape every London community. [www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk) ■

