

# TRADITIONAL LONDON Christmas



## GUIDE

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# A Traditional London Christmas: 2007




Tucked away down winding side streets and hidden alleyways, we've ventured off the beaten track to uncover a magical mix of London's undiscovered, traditional Christmas treats. From carol singing in vaulted Tudor barns, old-fashioned sweet shops stocking candy canes in small glass jars, and 150-year-old butcher shops specialising in rare-breed beef, wild geese and organically-reared, free-range turkeys, the best of the capital's unique, totally one-off, seasonal treats can all be found here.

Pick up a quail from Gordon Ramsay's south London supplier, hook yourself a salmon from the River Café's favourite sustainable source, stuff your stockings with freshly carved, hand-made, wooden toys, stock up on smelly cheese from a family-run fromagerie, glide around on ice in the rounded hollow of a castle moat, rummage through the stalls of a local festive market, explore the City's deserted streets in the footsteps of Samuel Pepys, then finally sleep it all off in a four-poster bed at a historic hotel.

For a truly traditional, totally different London Christmas, just start reading...

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# Sugar & Spice

Sweet teeth beware! London is stuffed full of gooey, creamy, sticky and spicy cakes, puddings, chocolate and sweet shops baked to perfection and ripe for business this Christmas. Forget mass-made, conveyor belt produce and head to one of the capital's traditional, independent confectioners for some especially scrummy seasonal treats...

89 Lower Sloane Street, SW1W 8DA

## L'Artisan du Chocolat

❄️ If you haven't yet visited this innovative, highly revered, choc shop, then a trip here to pick up some essential Christmas treats is the perfect excuse. Trained in Belgium (the home of chocolate), ex-pastry chef Gerard Coleman has elevated this simple, small-scale London shop to almost iconic status. While some of the flavours might seem a tad unusual, you just have to trust Coleman's expertise and judgement and dive right in. Among their seasonal delights are nuts and caramels served in an edible chocolate pan and some truly tempting dark chocolate baubles studded with sugar diamonds and stuffed with, guess what, more chocs. Everything is made entirely of natural ingredients (one of which is large quantities of sugar), with no nasty additives or preservatives. Because of this, all of their goodies have to be consumed within two or sometimes three weeks so make sure you don't make your Christmas purchases too early. Alternatively, go in early, buy up the shop and then "suddenly" remember that they need to be eaten within two weeks. Cram them all in your mouth in one cocoa-crazed frenzy and then head back for more delectable morsels a couple of days before Christmas. L'Artisan can even provide a chocolate-y device to help you keep track of your key Christmas dates; their beautifully crafted Advent calendar box dedicates one couture chocolate for every one of the days leading up to Christmas.

**Phone:** 020 7824 8365

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-19:00

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

1 Royal Arcade, Old Bond Street, W1S 4QF

## Charbonnel et Walker

❄️ Oozing with festival flavours the truffles and treats hidden inside this swanky Old Bond Street emporium offer an exclusive, sweet Christmas treat. From their gift-wrapped boxes of liqueurs to their individually-wrapped chocolate snowmen and Santas you can pick up some tasty stocking fillers and gifts. For a truly seasonal indulgence we recommend the truffles - particularly the Champagne centred or the port and cranberry flavoured varieties. This long-established chocolatier is now the holder of a royal warrant and, in spite of the shop's continental origins, the

goodies feel essentially English. In the heart of Mayfair, one of London's most exclusive areas, if you fancy indulging in some designer present shopping you couldn't be better placed. Just wander along Old and New Bond streets venturing off into Albermarle and Dover streets. If the merchandising frenzy all gets too much, refresh your sensibilities with a spot of art at the Royal Academy on Piccadilly or take time out to admire the lights that are traditionally some of London's most tasteful.

**Phone:** 020 7491 0939

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-18:00, Sun 11:30-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Piccadilly Circus Tube

202 Upper Street, N1 1RQ

## Euphorium Bakery

❄️ This traditional bakery, drawing on British and Gallic roots, has made an indelible mark on the foodies of Islington. Despite leaning undeniably towards French fancies, this passionate Islington bakery offers its customers some top quality British fare every Christmas. Their puddings and mince pies are some of the best in London while their strudels, apple and ginger cakes and Chocolate Marquises offer excellent alternatives to the standard seasonal sweets. Don't forget to pick up a couple of their celebrated croissants (treat yourself to the ones delicately sprinkled with almonds) for Christmas breakfast while you're there. If you're in need of a rest, there's a large seating area inside, alternatively grab your goodies and carry on shopping. Parts of Upper Street may have become fairly mainstream over the years but Euphorium's plot further up towards Highbury & Islington has a number of independent boutiques and gift shops full of unusual bits that are worth browsing after you've stocked up on cakes. When you're done, head back down towards Angel and roam around the narrow, winding passages stuffed with antique shops and cafes that lurk behind the green.

\*A folly of riches, there's also another Euphorium branch in nearby Chapel Market.

**Phone:** 020 7704 6905

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 7:00-23:00, Sat & Sun 8:00-midnight

**Nearest Station:** Highbury & Islington Tube / Rail

181 Piccadilly, W1A 1ER

## Fortnum & Mason

❄️ If you're a Christmas pudding fan and a tastebud traditionalist then a trip to Fortnum & Mason's famous food hall is a must. Stocking the renowned and well-regarded King George Christmas Pudding, crammed full of fruit - including a healthy dose of prunes - and held together with beef suet, this quintessentially old-fashioned sweet treat is perfect for the season. Still the purveyor of food and wine to the Royal Family, Fortnum's upmarket food hall is piled high with tonnes of gastronomic delights so if you come in here just for the pudding it'll require all of your willpower not to leave with bags of other goodies. Some of the delicacies here are a little overpriced, but the quality is exceptionally high and packaging is exquisite. Adorned with chandeliers and marble pillars the 300-year-old interior reflects the traditions of opulence and fine living which this shop supports and is hard to beat when decked out in traditional Christmas glitter. From its pre-war gentility to its gilded furnishings F&M appears as an appealing anachronism in today's modern age of convenience and comes highly recommended in the run-up to Christmas.

**Phone:** 020 7734 8040

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 9:00 - 21:00.

**Nearest Station:** Tottenham Court Road Tube

20 Northcross Road, SE22 9EU

## Hope and Greenwood

❄️ Chocolate pudding bars, champagne truffles, marzipan fruits, chunks of liquorice and jars of stripey candy sticks, this quaint East Dulwich sweetie cavern really goes to town at Christmas time. If you can hold back long enough, take a bit of time before you enter the shop to admire the amazing seasonal window display that taunts customers with its array of sticky treats and stocking fillers. Once inside, the store's bright, 1950s-style decor has all the appeal of a bygone era, with husband-and-wife owners, Miss Hope and Mr Greenwood, continuing the theme on in their own, richly-retro 50s clothing. Full of nostalgia and brimming with friendly service, a Christmas confectionary-buying trip here comes highly recommended. Dulwich has a really village-y feel to it and is certainly worth the slightly arduous trip out from central London. Delicious delis and florists flank the vibrant Lordship Lane (just around the corner from Hope and Greenwood), while the busy and beautiful Dulwich Park provides the perfect walkway to the stunning, John Soane-designed picture gallery crammed full of 17th and 18th century Old Master paintings.

**Phone:** 020 8613 1777 / 0870 850

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00 - 18:00,  
Sun and Bank Holidays 11:00 - 17:00

**Nearest Station:** East Dulwich Rail or New Cross Gate Tube

22 Cornwall Road, SE1 8TW

## Konditor & Cook

❄️ Konditor & Cook specialise in the creation of amazingly tasty cakes which are also sold on to some of the finest restaurants in the city. With a reputation for serving up the best mince pies in London - if not Britain (the 'Telegraph') - Christmas offers another great excuse (not that you should need one) to venture inside their cosy, plum-coloured, confectionery and flour-filled premises. Traditional Christmas cakes, spicy German cookies, sugary Stollen and cinnamon stars are just some of the seasonal delights on offer. This venue, on the corner of a quaint side-street in Waterloo, framed by well-preserved rows of dinky terraced houses, comes into its own at Christmas. In a relatively undeveloped part of Southwark - now protected by a well-deserved conservation status - from the outside it looks just as you imagine an original Victorian "shoppe" would do. Inside rows of dark wooden shelves stuffed full of goodies promote the traditional, historic theme. A favourite with local workers, it's best avoided at peak times - in the mornings and at lunchtimes. Round off your shopping trip with a pint at the friendly King's Arms on nearby Roupell Street. Full of stained glass and wood panelling, with the exception of a bright conservatory at the back, the pub exists much as it would have done 100 years ago.

Other Konditor & Cook London branches include Southwark, Chancery Lane, the City and Soho.

**Phone:** 020 7261 0456

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 7:30-18:30, Sat 8:30-14:30

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail or Lambeth North Tube

28 Greek Street, W1D 5DQ

## Maison Bertaux

❄️ A Soho landmark since 1871 - when Soho really was the only place in Britain where you could eat decent continental food - Maison Bertaux is a charming little French deli and patisserie, dotted with mirrors, half-a-dozen mismatched tables and an eccentric accordion-playing owner. You're unlikely to find the traditional British Christmas puddings and pies here, but if you're after more continental confectionery to tantalise your tastebuds then the cream-filled cakes, croissants, slices and tartes on display are guaranteed to satisfy. Old-fashioned, essentially French and highly atmospheric, we recommend you sit down for a pot of tea and something sticky before taking away your Christmas purchases. The bright red interior and glittering lights feel suitably festive, while the gentle jazz playing upstairs (where there's also an art gallery) is guaranteed to soothe away any seasonal stresses. Thanks to its reputation and prime location in the heart of central London it does get busy, a circumstance its dinky interior finds hard to cope with at times, but its bustle is part of its charm and if you manage to grab a table then chances are you'll be there for a while.

**Phone:** 020 7437 6007

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 8:30-23:00, Sun 8:30-19:30

**Nearest Station:** Leicester Square Tube

59 Ledbury Road, W11 2AA

## Melt

❄️ Regular tastings, an on-site, open-view kitchen, award-winning master-chocolatier, Keith Hurdman, and some of the best chocs in town make Melt a mouth-watering option when it comes to confectionery. Stand and drool as organic truffles, melted chocolate shots and spiced, crispy orange discs (a perfect festive treat) are rustled up on cool white marble slabs in full view of customers. Children's Hour offers youngsters the chance to get sticky making their own unique range of chocolate treats. Sleek packaging, cool surrounds and top-quality service complete the picture. Head here for great gastronomic Christmas gifts or sweet treats for your seasonal supper.

**Phone:** 020 7727 5030

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 9:00 - 18:00, Sun 11:00 - 16:00

**Nearest Station:** Notting Hill Gate Tube

57a Brewer Street, W1F 9UL

## Mrs Kibble's Olde Sweet Shoppe

❄️ An old-fashioned, sugary-sweet, treat temptation in an area of London known for its more alternative delights, Mrs Kibble's Olde Sweet Shoppe in Soho offers pure, unadulterated, candy-filled fun. Perfect for providing, quaint, old-fashioned, Christmas stocking fillers, this tiny haven pays homage to the sweets of yesteryear in the only way possible - no frills, no fuss, friendly service, traditional tunes playing in the background and lots of jars (about 180) crammed full of goodies. Forget Flying Saucers, Rhubarb and Custard is the current, No 1 best-selling bon-bon de jour, but whatever your fancy - be it Cola Cubes or Sherbet Dip Dabs - your sweet tooth will find it hidden somewhere inside this pint-sized store. For a Christmas gift guaranteed to send the lucky recipient on a sugar-fuelled trip down memory lane, indulge in one of their Nostalgic Sweet Jars, crammed full of old fashioned sweets from Wham bars to Popping Candy. Give the team here a bit

of notice and they'll even create personalised labels for each jar. There's also a very attractive, sparkling new branch in Marylebone, St Christopher's Place.

**Phone:** 020 7734 6633

**Timing:** Mon to Wed 10:00-18:00, Thu & Fri 10:00-19:00, Sat 11:00-19:00. Sun 12 noon - 16:00

**Nearest Station:** Piccadilly Circus Tube

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33 Camden Passage, Islington, N1 8EA

## Paul A Young Fine Chocolates

❄️ Before he was a full-time chocolatier, Paul Young was patissier for Marco Pierre White. The drama and perfectionism demanded by a Michelin-starred restaurant are both apparent in the exquisite chocolates and desserts produced by his shop. The more impressive are finished at the counter in front of customers, while the smaller sweets and chocolates are jewel-like in their perfection. Young's haute cuisine background - he's a Gold Award-winner at the World Chocolate Awards - means there are plenty of weird and wonderful flavours available, but above all this is a shop that is about freshly made, thoroughly indulgent, luxury chocolates and puddings. If you fancy a dark, dreamy cocoa alternative to Christmas pud then take your tastebuds up to Islington. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays (chocolate workshop day).

**Phone:** 020 7424 5750

**Timing:** Wed, Thu & Sat 11:00 - 18:00, Fri 11:00 - 19:00, Sun 12:00 - 17:00. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

**Nearest Station:** Angel Tube

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14 Princess Arcade, SW1Y 6DS

## Prestat

❄️ With Roald Dahl and Her Majesty counted as just a couple of their biggest fans, this brightly-coloured, richly scented, teeny tiny chocolate shop tucked away in a corner of the Princes Arcade belies its significant status and reach. One of the world's oldest and grandest chocolate companies, Prestat's iconic gilt-embossed packaging comes into its own at Christmas. The Kitty re-design of the interior has transformed the small store into a vibrant, cartoon-esque den of psychedelia. Prestat's magical wonderland interior makes a great seasonal setting for their nostalgic range of sweets, including the delectable sugared mice.

**Phone:** 020 7629 4838

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 9:30-18:00, Sat 10:00-17:00  
Open Christmas Eve until 2/3pm. Closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

**Nearest Station:** Piccadilly Circus Tube

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1 Blenheim Crescent, W11 2EE

## The Spice Shop

❄️ Hard to miss with its bright yellow awning emblazoned with the word 'SPICE', this cosy emporium on the corner of Portobello Road will get your olfactory glands working overtime this Christmas. If you're planning on making your own pudding, cake or mince pies this festive season, a trip to this west London venue is a must. Originally a stall on the market, the business has evolved over recent years and now stocks pots, tins and bags full of over 2,500 herbs and spices. Unique in its concept and service this is THE place to come for essences, extracts, seasonings, seeds, pods, powders, oils, roots and leaves. If your tastebuds really need reviving invest

in their Essential Spice Tin, crammed with no less than 49 different spices. Running directly off Portobello Road, The Spice Shop is also ideally placed for an intensive, gift-buying rummage along the hugely eclectic market. If you fancy ending your west London outing with a rest, combined with a Christmas flick, the plush sofas and creative programme on offer inside the popular Electric Cinema are hard to beat.

**Phone:** 020 7221 4448

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 9:30-18:00, Sun 11:00-16:00

**Nearest Station:** Ladbroke Grove Tube

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110-112 Columbia Road, E2 7RG

## Treacle

❄️ Just like its name, this unique establishment sandwiched in the middle of Columbia Road Flower Market is sweet, sticky and finger-licking good. Christmas is a time for tradition spiced up with a large doses of nostalgia and, full of comfortingly familiar, essentially British, tea-time treats, this is the place to come to relive the comforting morsels that have fed a nation through times of turmoil and triumph. The cupcakes here are all hand-crafted, beautifully decorated and crowned with perfectly blended buttercup icing. They also come in three sizes (we recommend the BIG one) in tangy lemon, rich chocolate or smooth vanilla flavours. Jammy Dodgers and a range of sponges also adorn the shelves all year-round. Seasonal specialities boost the range from month to month, while piping hot tea served on the premises lures customers to stop and linger, savouring a sponge or two before heading out with a packed bag full of goodies. It's only open on a Sunday so we recommend you combine a trip with a visit to the flower market. Pick up some seasonal blooms and a Christmas tree, and satisfy your seasonal sweet cravings all in one leisurely Sunday morning jaunt.

**Phone:** 020 7729 5657

**Timing:** Sun 9:30-15:30. Open Sundays only

**Nearest Station:** Bethnal Green Tube

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40 Brushfield Street, E1 6AG

## Verde & Co

❄️ Wooden crates crammed with rich, vibrant vegetables, wicker baskets full of flowers, fruits and herbs, dark wooden shutters, heavy green awnings, blackboards advertising "Sandwiches, Coffee, Soup" and a few sets of weathered tables and chairs dotted on the pavement all contribute to the continental feel of this gourmet food emporium in London's East End. At Christmas time the shelves burst with seasonal offerings including handmade puddings and mince pies, majestic panettone towers, jars of glacé fruits and a huge glass case full of Pierre Marcolini chocolates. With a reputation for selling fine, high-quality produce in an authentic, atmospheric and rustic setting this dinky emporium exudes just the right old-fashioned atmosphere for a traditional, festive shopping trip. Manager and ex-chef Havery Cabaniss ensures all produce is sourced from co-ops and small, family-run enterprises wherever possible, helping you promote an ethical Christmas. He also rustles up lunch and dinner for a few lucky customers on most Fridays (booking essential) so if you want to taste the goods before you take them home for Christmas, time your visit for a Friday. Further shopping opportunities present themselves next door at renowned deli, A Gold, and inside nearby Spitalfields Market. Time your visit well and you could round off your day with a carol concert at Hawksmoor's popular Christ Church.

**Phone:** 020 7247 1924

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 9:00-17:00 or 18:00, Sat & Sun 10:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Liverpool Street Tube / Rail

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135 Muswell Hill Broadway, N10 3RS

## W Martyn

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❄️ Come face to face with the Ghost of Christmas Past and pick up some seasonal sticky treats at this vintage, fine food retailer. Affectionately referred to as the "Fortnum & Mason of Muswell Hill" this family-run, fine food business dates back over 100 years to 1887. The stunning Art Deco facade and interior have changed little over the years - an old coffee roaster rests proudly in the window underneath the iconic red lettering introducing the shop, while inside brass scales, solid oak shelving and row upon row of simply designed, quality goods hark back to 1930s London. Tea and coffee is their speciality but really there's a bit of everything yummy here, with Christmas hampers boasting an alluring range of goodies from pickles to puddings, condiments to cakes. It may well be off the beaten track but it really is worth making a trip to this part of north London just to breathe in the scent of freshly roasted coffee and the warm, family atmosphere that pervades throughout. Round off your shopping trip with a bracing winter walk through nearby Highgate Wood, stopping off for sustenance in the idyllically placed Pavilion Café hidden away near the cricket pitch in the middle of this ancient forest.

**Phone:** 020 8883 5642

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 9:30-17:30 (Thu til 13:00), Sat 9:00-17:30

**Nearest Station:** Highgate Tube

# Hotel Hideaways

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Up to your elbows in turkey stuffing, frantically list making, the arrival of the mother in law... Christmas is the perfect time to get away from it all. We've chosen some of our favourite places to stay in London from the most romantic to the best for a cosy Christmas and hip New Year. Some even promise to fill up your Christmas stocking.

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75 Sloane Street, SW1W 9SG

## The Cadogan Hotel

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❄️ Steeped in history, The Cadogan was the scene of the arrest of Irish playwright Oscar Wilde, right here in room 118. If booking the Edward VII Suite, you'll be on the very spot where the future King of England had a liaison with his friend, actress Lillie Langtry. You can bet they weren't shy of the mistletoe. Today, The Cadogan makes an excellent choice for the serious fashionista with a weakness for designer labels. Sloane Street is famous for its A-list shops with Gucci, Tiffany,

Prada and Harvey Nichols among the catwalk names on the street. If spending Christmas at The Cadogan why not do it in style and host your own private dinner party? You can hire the private dining room, Oscar & Lillie, for up to 20 people at a reduced rate of £45 per person which includes a three-course menu. If you're looking for a more intimate meal, there's also a limitless wine and Christmas dinner at the hotel's famous Langtry's restaurant. Opened just a year ago, and once part of the home of the famous actress, you get three courses and free flowing wine for £29.50, or £35 per person (16th November until 23rd December). Book in for a romantic Christmas getaway and you'll be following in the footsteps of Edward VII and Lillie.

**Reservations:** 020 7437 4370

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

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West Side, Wimbledon Common, Wimbledon SW19 4UE

## Cannizaro House

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❄️ Staying at this historic Georgian house, dating from 1705 and rebuilt in 1900, is as close as you'll get to being in the country without leaving London. The Italian name may seem a little out of place in this west London neighbourhood; it comes from an earlier resident, the Sicilian Duke of Cannizaro and his Scottish wife who lived here from 1817 until 1841. Set in Cannizaro Park, a Grade II\* listed garden on the west side of Wimbledon Common, it's surrounded by gardens and parkland. This tranquil setting just outside Wimbledon means it is quiet but still only a short walk across the common to Wimbledon's main high street with good shopping but without the stress of Oxford Street. If you do want to go to central London there are regular buses, Tubes and trains providing easy access - you can get to the city centre in around 45 minutes. It may be out of season but no mention of Wimbledon is complete without reference to its annual tennis championship (last week of June to first week of July) and although you won't see any games being played at this time of year the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum (closed 24th - 26th December and 1st January) is worth a visit. The award-winning museum comes complete with state-of-the-art interactive touch screens and a 'walk-through' of the men's dressing room with John McEnroe showing how it was in the 1980s. You'll also get to see the famous Centre Court.

**Reservations:** 020 8879 1464

**Nearest Station:** Wimbledon Tube / Rail

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George Street, W1H 5BJ

## Durrants

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❄️ Durrants is my preferred choice for a Christmas shopping weekend. It's a few streets from Oxford Street, though you'd never know it from the quiet, cosy atmosphere. Tucked away in Marylebone, this townhouse is perfect for a shopping trip with style. The area is crammed with smart boutiques, great restaurants and, of course, has the mega shops of Oxford Street nearby. Walking from the hotel to Oxford Street will take you past Manchester Square where the wonderful Wallace Collection is found - a must-see if you're staying here and so romantic. With the woes of the worn-out shopper in mind, not to mention their sore bunions, Durrants have taken pity and are offering retail enthusiasts a special weekend deal (valid until 23rd December). So, after a tough day's shopping, you can enjoy a bottle of house wine in the bar. And there's no need to rush off home either; you'll get a lie-in on Sunday thanks to an extended check-out time until 5pm.

**Reservations:** 020 7437 4370

**Nearest Station:** Marble Arch / Bond Street Tube

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**Beeston Place, Grosvenor Gardens, SW1W 0JW**

## The Goring

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❄️ Current owner Jeremy Goring's Great Grandpa built The Goring, near to Buckingham Palace, in 1910 and it has been in the family ever since. This heritage gives the grand old hotel a wonderful family feel which, when you're having a Christmas away from home, is exactly what's called for. The five-star Christmas celebrations start with Jeremy Goring's Champagne Party on Christmas Eve, lavish dinner and then, at 11.30pm, Midnight Mass at St Peter's in Eaton Square, followed by mince pies and hot chocolate back at the hotel. Utter Christmas bliss. You even get Christmas Day Morning tea and coffee served in your room and a Christmas gift from Jeremy Goring followed by breakfast in the dining room. The highpoint is always Christmas Day dinner - under the guidance of executive chef Derek Quelch who came here from Claridges - when you can indulge in roast beef or turkey with all the trimmings and of course the famous Goring Christmas Pudding, served in the hotel's dining room. And it's not just for Christmas Day, you can also order from the Christmas menus from Christmas Eve until the end of Boxing Day.

**Reservations:** 020 7396 9000

**Nearest Station:** Victoria Tube / Rail

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**Ashley Lane, Hendon, NW4 1HF**

## Hendon Hall

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❄️ Built for actor David Garrick, the newly refurbished fine, porticoed mansion of Hendon Hall is not exactly what you'd expect to find down a suburban street off the Barnet bypass, tucked away behind a mock-Tudor gatehouse. If arriving by car, make sure you get on the west part of Ashley Lane as the North Circular splits it in two. Once through the graceful entrance, this hotel is both welcoming and cosy with elegant public areas and floor-to-ceiling windows. Excellent breakfast and home-made biscuits in your room are the type of personal touches that make this the best place to stay in the area. The grounds of the hotel offer a small amount of greenery but for that countryside-in-London feel there's the 791 acres of Hampstead Heath to romp around in. If you're feeling energetic, go for a brisk walk over the heath to Kenwood House where you'll find a special Christmas Fair at this time of year. Hampstead has a lovely village-y feel as does nearby Primrose Hill, both are ideal for Christmas shopping. But if it's culture you're after, stop off at the Camden Arts Centre or visit the newly opened 176 Gallery, home of the Zabłudowicz Collection; visit on 16th December (2pm) and you can see curator and head of the collection, Elizabeth Neilson, in conversation.

**Reservations:** 020 8203 3341

**Nearest Station:** Hendon Central Tube

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**30 Portman Square, W1H 7BH**

## Hyatt Regency Churchill

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❄️ The paint has only just dried following a multi-million pound refurbishment at the Hyatt Regency London. The redesign means that rooms and suites now have a light and airy feel with a contemporary finish and each comes complete with flat-screen LCD TV. The hotel's corridors have also been tarted up in the refurb, with prints of the local garden squares

surrounding the hotel; some of the rooms themselves offer stunning views over Portman Square. Also nearby is Hyde Park which offers a perfect respite from the city's bustle. Close to Baker Street and Oxford Street, the hotel is very convenient for some credit card-worthy shopping as well as offering a selection of good restaurants on your doorstep; one, Locanda Locatelli, is within the hotel itself, while delicious dim sum is just a short stroll away at the Royal China Club. By afternoon you'll be in need of a break and traditional English tea at the hotel's Montagu restaurant is a fun option; served between 3pm and 6pm, there's a wonderful selection of tea, warm scones with jam and clotted cream, turkey sandwiches, mini-mince pies and delicious treats including some bubbly. If you're staying on Christmas Eve or having lunch in The Montagu on Christmas Day - which starts with a glass of chilled Billecart-Salmon champagne - you will also receive a visit from Father Christmas and those under twelve will get a free gift - providing they've been good, of course.

**Reservations:** 020 7486 5800

**Nearest Station:** Marble Arch Tube

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**London County Hall, Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7PB**

## Marriott County Hall

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❄️ Overlooking the London Eye and directly across the river from Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, it's the views from this hotel that really sell it. This privileged position used to belong to the Greater London Council - hence the 'County Hall' in the hotel name - and some of the trappings of its former role still remain. Beautiful bronze doors, polished marbled floors and meeting rooms remind you these were once corridors of power while the Debating Chamber has been left untouched and is available to hire. With the Aquarium underneath and Dali Universe exhibition all under the same roof as the Marriott, there's plenty to do, literally on your doorstep. A gentle walk along this stretch of the river along Belvedere Road and Upper Ground reveals a cultural hot spot with the newly renovated Royal Festival Hall and South Bank Centre putting on a full and varied arts programme. There are also some wonderfully festive events at this time of year to get you geared up for Christmas like the Frost Fair and Slow Food UK Market. Alternatively, save your stay for a post-Christmas trip. There's no better place to celebrate New Year's Eve in style, watching 1.4 million pounds worth of fireworks reflected in the river Thames (stays are available from a minimum of four nights including 31st December). And, with an extensive gym, spa and pool, you can relax and recover from the effects of festive over-indulgence.

**Reservations:** 020 7928 5200

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail

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**34-36 Sussex Gardens, Hyde Park, W2 1UL**

## Pavilion Hotel

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❄️ You've got to take a second look when an establishment unashamedly describes itself as a "groovy", "rock 'n' roll" hotel. With each of the 30 rooms imaginatively styled on a different theme, this is a colourful, flamboyant place where the rooms are the rockstars. How about spending Christmas in the 'Honky Tonky Afro' Seventies tribute room or in the Moorish boudoir 'Casablanca Nights'? There's enough check in the 'Highland Fling' to last you until next Christmas. Created by brother and sister team 29-year-old Danny and 33-year-old Noshi Karne, the Pavilion is not shy of making a statement - which is why it's regularly featured in magazine shoots and music videos. Craig David has posed in 'Cosmic Girl', Jarvis

Cocker has taken a ciggie break in the 'Secret Garden' and 'Soul Nights' is Naomi Campbell's favourite. Owner Danny previously had a modelling career, travelling the world and staying in boring, identikit hotels; this is most certainly the antidote. While the sometimes lurid colours (you're advised to bring shades if you're staying in 'Honky Tonky Afro') and over-the-top decor isn't to everyone's taste, it is quirky, fun and undeniably unique. And, considering its central location, close to Paddington Station (handy for the Heathrow Express) with Edgware Road Tube station just two minutes walk away, it's also great value for money. If you're looking for something a bit different this Christmas, there's really no need to look any further.

**Reservations:** 020 7262 0905

**Nearest Station:** Edgware Road Tube or Paddington Tube / Rail

**3 St Martin's Street, Leicester Square, WC2H 7HL**

## Radisson Edwardian Leicester Sq.

❄️ Despite being part of a large-scale chain, the Radisson Leicester Square manages to feel like an exclusive boutique hotel. The cream colours and leather headboards are punctuated with lime green and deep pink to create a very personalised style. There are two Radissons near Leicester Square, the other, being the more old-fashioned Hampshire, is actually on the square, so don't get them confused. This one, just off Leicester Square on St Martin's Street, is nestled between the square - home to London's film premieres - and the National Portrait Gallery, just moments from Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery. Less well known (and certainly far smaller) but often worth investigating is the Photographers' Gallery, also just a few minutes' walk from the hotel heading towards Covent Garden. Close to Piccadilly Circus, this is a great base for exploring the city centre, in the heart of the action with shops, restaurants and theatres conveniently on your doorstep.

**Reservations:** 020 7437 4370

**Nearest Station:** Leicester Square Tube

**Peter's Lane, Cowcross Street, EC1M 6DS**

## The Rookery

❄️ As cosy and wood-panelled as a gentleman's club but not nearly so stuffy, The Rookery is a perfect romantic getaway - although not for Christmas itself (it's closed for Christmas and Boxing Day). Down a side-street near Smithfield, the hotel's well-polished wood-panelling, roaring open log fires, four-poster beds, stone-flagged floors and antique furniture give the place a wonderfully warm, homely atmosphere.

The preferred location for designers and ad agencies, Clerkenwell has a good selection of trendy bars, gastro pubs and clubs - Turnmills and Fabric, two of London's finest, are within five minutes' walk. The areas around Smithfield Market, Exmouth Market and St John Street all make good hunting grounds for eating and drinking - which is, after all, an essential part of Christmas. If we had to choose favourites they'd include Smith's for the Sunday papers, St John for meat lovers. For the newly engaged a trip to Hatton Garden, two minutes from the Rookery, is a long-standing tradition and for those looking for something sparkling there are nearly 300 jewellery businesses in the area. But it's not just about indulging, also nearby are some of London's finest cultural icons: the Barbican and Tate Modern are within walking distance as is St Paul's, to remind us why we're going to all

this trouble. Simply wander out and you'll find something to see and do, whatever your idea of fun. There's no dining room at the Rookery so you'll just have to have your continental breakfast served to you in your room, a small inconvenience we think. Meanwhile, downstairs, big comfortable chairs await by the open fire; sip on a celebratory glass of something strong and leave your money in the honest jar.

**Reservations:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Closed Saturday 24th (Christmas Eve) - 27th December 2007. Closed Saturday 24th (Christmas Eve) - Thursday 27th December 2007

**Nearest Station:** Farringdon Tube / Rail

**3 Westbourne Terrace, Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park, W2 3UL**

## Royal Park

❄️ You'll be welcomed with a drink and mince pies on arrival at the Royal Park over Christmas. In the evening, champagne, canapés and a Christmas stocking are among the treats in store (available 15th December 2007 to 8th January 2008). Located on Westbourne Terrace, the hotel is well positioned for taking advantage of seasonal events like the Winter Wonderland at Hyde Park, just a few streets away. Also within walking distance is Sheldon Square, a futuristic space in the new Paddington Basin development which boasts two new eateries worth investigating: Pearl Liang and Yakitoria. Just two stops on the Tube and you're in Notting Hill, well worth a visit for its designer boutiques and trendy gastro pubs. The Cow is an institution and a great place for a long, laid-back pub lunch on a Sunday. From there head down Chepstow Road, to Westbourne Grove and you'll see a huge Space NK. This whole area is great for upmarket boutiques like Heidi Klein, Dinny Hall and Scolah Pattullo as well as interesting places to eat. We like the newly opened Bumpkin, owned by the same people as the South Kensington nightclub Boujis (a favourite with young royals) and offering a taste of the country in town. Head west along Westbourne Grove and you'll reach the adjacent Ledbury Road, a pretty street lined with shops like J & M Davidson for bags and not one but two branches of Matches for labels like Marc by Marc Jacobs, Gharani Stok, Prada and Marni at No 60-64. Chic, elegant and understated; it's exactly why Notting Hill has made such a name for itself.

**Reservations:** 020 7479 6600

**Nearest Station:** Paddington Tube / Rail

**29-31 Draycott Place, SW3 2SH**

## San Domenico House

❄️ The style of the Italian owner is firmly stamped on this beautiful townhouse hotel whose red-brick exterior cannot prepare you for what lies on the other side. Opulent and ornate, the hotel is crammed with heavy fabrics, cherubic angels and furniture touched with gold leaf. It's as if Sicilian owner, Mrs Melpignano, has furnished the hotel with things she's picked up on her regular trips to and from Italy. Dividing her time between here and San Domenico Palace, her other hotel in Puglia, Italy, she has plenty of opportunity to source the one-off quirky and antique pieces that make the hotel unique. Tucked away down a side-street near the Sloane Square end of The King's Road, San Domenico House is a real hidden gem. And it's perfectly placed for Christmas shopping with the famous King's Road so nearby.

**Reservations:** 020 7581 5757

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

50 Berners Street, W1T 3NG

## Sanderson

❄️ Sanderson isn't planning anything special for Christmas, instead they're going all-out for New Year's Eve. The theme is Burlesque with a star performance by Immodesty Blaize, crowned Miss Exotic World 2007 in Las Vegas this year. Outrageously over-the-top Burlesque dancers will be serving champagne and shots, culminating in Immodesty Blaize's performance just after midnight. The vibe-y Long Bar really knows how to put on a party so this special night is set to be an unforgettable one with lanterns lighting the Courtyard Garden and champagne fuelling the fun. Centrally positioned, Sanderson is a great choice for theatre lovers and for enjoying the sights of Soho. Berners Street adjoins Oxford Street making this a great place for shopping, and top restaurants are all there for the taking including the hotel's own Suka Malaysian restaurant. Or try nearby Charlotte Street which has more than its share of classy places to eat including Roka, for sushi on a par with Nobu, and Fino for top class tapas. If all that shopping and partying - not to mention sampling some of London's finest eateries - has worn you out, the Agua Spa at Sanderson is just the ticket. The white, calming space with specialist treatments like Eve Lom facials is the last word in luxury.

**Reservations:** 020 7437 4370

**Nearest Station:** Oxford Circus or Tottenham Court Road Tube

# Food & Flower Markets

"To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,  
Home again, home again, dancing a jig;  
To market, to market, to buy a fat hog;  
Home again, home again, jiggety-jog..."

Our guide to the best London markets for festive food and flowers will certainly have you jiggety-jogging all the way home. Faced with all that fresh produce you'll be pleased you avoided the neon lights of the faceless supermarkets where you wouldn't know if your sprouts have come from Timbuktu or Taunton. Highlights include a trip to Borough Market (the "larder of London"), and Columbia Road for fresh flowers, Christmas sprigs and the must-have mistletoe. Get ready to pucker up.

Trafalgar Way, E14 5ST

## Billingsgate Market

❄️ Originally a general market for corn, coal, iron, wine, salt, pottery, fish and other goods, Billingsgate is now the only London-based market dedicated to fish. From the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, fish and seafood were sold from stalls and sheds around the 'hythe' or dock at Billingsgate. The current market - a more modern manifestation overlooking Canary Wharf - is open Tuesday to Saturday from 5am to 8.30am with one trader based here on Sundays - John Stockwell Ltd specialising in shellfish (from 6am to 8am). The market is mainly aimed at wholesalers although it is open to the general public and the sight of the working market is worth seeing. In addition to a wide selection of fish and fish products, there are a few traders dealing in poultry, cooking oils, potatoes, trade sundries and specialist restaurant and catering supplies. If you are here to buy there is a half a stone limit when it comes to buying fish (this may vary with individual traders offering mixed boxes). Your best bet is to get there early if you want the catch of the day. Children under 12 not allowed.

**Phone:** 020 7987 1118

**Timing:** Tue to Sat 5:00-8:30. Closed on Tuesdays following a Bank Holiday Monday.

**Nearest Station:** Canary Wharf Tube

Southwark Street, SE1 1TJ

## Borough Market

❄️ Nestled in-between Borough High Street, Bedale Street, Stoney Street and Winchester Walk lives "London's Larder", more formally known as Borough Market. This gourmand's delight is London's oldest food market and boasts a mouth-watering range of fresh food stalls under its Dickensian wrought-iron roof. You can get everything you need for a very special gourmet Christmas dinner here. Turkey and all the trimmings, organic vegetables, fruity Christmas puddings, the full works. But just because it's a market doesn't mean it's cheap - and some of the delicious goods can leave you feeling out of pocket. Savvy shoppers take care to browse around for the best deals. So certainly feel free to do a little window shopping before you buy and you'll find there are plenty of goods to be had at reasonable prices.

### Extended Christmas Opening Hours:

Thu 20th Dec 2007 11:00-19:00

Fri 21st Dec 2007 12:00-18:00

Sat 22nd Dec 2007 9:00-16:00

Sun 23rd Dec 2007 10:00-16:00

Mon 24th (Christmas Eve) 2007 9:00-14:00

Fri 28th Dec 12:00-18:00

Sat 29th Dec 9:00-16:00

**Timing:** Thu 11:00-17:00, Fri 12:00-18:00, Sat 9:00-16:00 and daily from 20th Dec to 24th Dec (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

East London, E8 4PH

## Broadway Market

❄️ Broadway is a great little market that stars in David Cronenberg's recently released film 'Eastern Promises', a gripping thriller set and shot in contemporary London. It's certainly worth the trip down there for the tremendous

variety of goods at prices well below those at the more famous markets in town. There's a good selection of organic food including rare breed pork, veal and venison, sea food and fresh fish, handmade cheese, butter and butter milk, fair-trade coffee, and organic breads, cakes and pastries. You'll end up grazing as you go when you come to stock up on all the ingredients you need for a Christmas feast. And, while you're there, you can do some present scouting too; stalls selling everything from food to clothes are here. Hidden gems include the Marissa V clothing stall and Kate Garwood Ceramics - a little-known but fantastic potter. Broadway has a rich tradition of providing produce for the city; in years gone by, livestock would travel through what is now Broadway Market from London Fields - the last common grazing area - before their final stop at Slaughter Street in Brick Lane or East Smithfield. Broadway was also one of the original chartered open markets in London. It's good to see it is still as popular today and set to become a whole lot more famous after its starring role on the big screen.

**Timing:** Saturdays 9:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Bethnal Green Tube

**Columbia Road, Hackney, E2 7RG**

## Columbia Road Market

❄️ Lined with chic boutiques, every Sunday this historic street fills with a bright patchwork of hundreds of flower stalls. Columbia Road is the capital's most colourful and sweet-smelling market. At this time of year the market is crammed with Christmas trees (from 2nd December) in every shape and size, as well as holly, ivy and the all-important mistletoe. Cut flowers, shrubs, bedding plants and other horticultural delights are also for sale as well as topiary trees, pot plants, hanging baskets, bulbs and bouquets. While the 52 stalls only sell flowers and plants, the neighbouring shops and yards sell everything to cater for the green-fingered, from pots to potting soil. With most of the traders being based in Essex, many of the plants and flowers are grown and produced locally, reducing the impact on the environment. There are plenty of attractive cafes, pubs and stalls where you can make a pit-stop; Treacle is a personal favourite for a reviving cuppa. If travelling to the market by Tube, Old Street is the nearest station. Turn left on exit, walk along Old Street into Hackney Road and after 200 metres turn right into Columbia Road. Just be careful where you put that mistletoe on your way home.

**Phone:** 020 7377 8963

**Timing:** Sun 8:00 - 14:00

**Nearest Station:** Old Street Tube

**Covent Garden Piazza, WC2E 8RF**

## Covent Garden Food Market

❄️ The celebrated piazza of central London's former fruit and vegetable market returns, for twelve days this Christmas, to its original purpose. The Covent Garden Christmas Food Market runs from the 12th until the 23rd of December in the East and West Piazzas following the success of late night Thursday markets held here this summer. The food has a festive focus with meats for the roast, organic seasonal vegetables and fruits, smoked fish, oysters and, for afters, plum and figgy puddings, mince pies, finishing off with chocolates and Stilton. Why not? It's Christmas after all. The covered market will be beautifully lit and buzzing with a series of aerial acrobatics, some suspended from giant

balloons high up in the sky and performance art by Australian troupe Strange Fruit. There's also an environmentally commendable Christmas decoration swap shop (Thursday 6th to Sunday 23rd December) as well as more traditional activities like children's storytelling and carols from the St Paul's Choir (select dates). See [www.christmas-deluxe.com](http://www.christmas-deluxe.com) for details.

**Date:** Wednesday 12th - Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Time:** Mon to Sat 16:00-21:00, Sun 12:00-18:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Covent Garden Tube

**Whittington Avenue, off Gracechurch Street, EC3V 0DR**

## Leadenhall Market

❄️ Leadenhall Market is a restored Victorian covered market that sells traditional game, poultry, fish and meat.

Although there has been a forum (market place) on where Leadenhall Market stands today since the first century AD, the current wrought iron and glass building was designed in 1881 by Sir Horace Jones (architect of Billingsgate and Smithfield markets). Close to the Lloyd's of London building and the Bank of England, it's a popular place for city workers on lunch break so the best time to visit is early lunchtime as it gets very busy by 1pm. It's open Monday to Friday from 7:00 to 16:00 and is found in Whittington Avenue, off Gracechurch Street. Leadenhall is not only a scenic market place which makes for a lovely stroll around, it also sells some of the finest food in London. HS Linwood & Son, for example, has been serving the catch of the day since the 1980s and on Fridays a cluster of additional food stalls take over the centre of the covered market.

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 7:00-16:00, Wednesday 12th - Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Nearest Station:** Monument Tube

**Cramer Street Car Park, Marylebone High Street, W1U 3BN**

## Marylebone Farmers' Market

❄️ Marylebone village is one of those areas of central London that really does have a village feel. And this weekly Marylebone Farmers' Market, opened on 22nd June 2003, helps to compound that feeling as you stroll around its stalls displaying freshly picked produce. Currently the largest farmers' market under the London Farmers' Markets umbrella, there are 30 stalls to peruse. Pick up a hamper of Christmas preserves from Sadie Jennings, of Kush Cuisine [www.kushcuisine.com](http://www.kushcuisine.com) (on the 2nd and 9th December), containing apple and cranberry jam, strawberry, fig and orange jam and five-fruit and whisky marmalade. Also look out for Farm 2 Kitchen's traditional 'Festive Tudor' pie, fit for a king and made using locally-sourced ingredients. Christmas trees, wreaths and fragrant cones are also on sale as well as expert chilli growers, Edible Ornaments, who can help turn up the temperature on a cold winter's morning. Once you've had your fill at the market you can slip down a side street and visit Marylebone's shops, cafes and restaurants; on Moxon Street La Fromagerie and the Ginger Pig (who also have an excellent charcuterie in Borough Market) are not to be missed. Walk towards Bond Street and you'll come across the Wallace Collection which is certainly worth a stop-off. Or go via the pretty, pedestrianised St Christopher's Place passage and you can be on Oxford Street in five minutes with Selfridges nearby.

**Phone:** 020 7704 9659

**Timing:** Sundays 10:00-14:00

**Nearest Station:** Marble Arch Tube

Orange Square, corner of Pimlico Road, SW1W 8LP

## Pimlico Road Farmers' Market

❄️ On an average Saturday you'll find a small gathering of around 25 stalls in this pedestrianised space outside La Poule au Pot. There's an intimate, friendly atmosphere at Pimlico Road Farmers' Market, which is helped by the farmers and stall owners (largely from nearby Kent, Surrey and Sussex) offering free samples and snippets of advice. For Christmas, you can stock up on organic meats and goodies like celeriac, parsnips and carrots, all fresh from the growers. Freshly baked mince pies come from Flourish Bakery, based in Tottenham, while London's own Flour Power Bakery presents traditional stollen bread from their outlet in Surrey Quays. Christmas hampers are a great way to stock up the larder over the festive feasting period and the ones you'll find here, by Popina, come crammed with organic delicacies like chocolate chestnut tarts and pear, stilton and walnut tarts. This part of Pimlico is especially picturesque, with the market in place on a crisp Saturday morning - and with Daylesford Organic across the road - you really are spoilt for choice when it comes to some of the best free-range and preservative-free food.

**Phone:** 020 7704 9659

**Timing:** Saturdays 9:00-13:00

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

Southbank Centre Square,  
outside the Royal Festival Hall, SE1 8XX

## Slow Food UK Market

❄️ Where your food comes from is fast becoming a factor when it comes to choosing what you eat. So London's first slow food market is a welcome addition to the capital's Christmas shopping options. Slow Food UK, the organisers behind the market on Southbank Centre Square, outside the Royal Festival Hall, are all about locally-produced food, grown in a sustainable way without compromising on taste. So you can buy your meat, sprouts and spuds knowing that they've been produced with minimal harm to the environment. With more than 20 stalls offering fresh and preserved foods, as well as sustainably-produced craft products you'll have plenty to put on the plate come Christmas. And, because the market runs almost up to Christmas Day, you can rest assured that you're getting produce at its freshest.

**Venue:** Southbank Centre Square, outside the Royal Festival Hall

**Address:** Belvedere Road, SE1 8XX

**Phone:** 0871 663 2501

**Date:** Thursday 20th - Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Time:** 11:00-20:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Southwark Tube

West Smithfield, EC1A 9PQ

## Smithfield Market

❄️ For tenants of Smithfield Market getting up in the dark is nothing out of the ordinary; with the market opening at 4am these hard-working folk start when London's clubbers are just going home. As one of the oldest and most attractive markets in London, Smithfield is a must-see. Steeped in

history, there's been a lively trade in livestock on this ground since the 10th century when horses, swine and oxen were sold in the 'smooth field' on Fridays. It's this smoothness which is said to be where Smithfield gets its name. Today, meat, poultry, cheese, pies, and other delicatessen goods are available for wholesale here so the crowd it attracts largely consists of butchers, restaurateurs and caterers. The central avenues allow customers to walk through the market but to get a closer look clean, protective gear must be worn. The market buildings which still stand and operate today were designed by City Architect Sir Horace Jones in 1866. Rail was taking off at that time and the East and West Buildings were built above new lines connecting London to every other part of the country, enabling meat to be delivered directly to the market. A recent £70 million refurbishment has created a thoroughly modern, temperature-controlled environment inside a magnificent Grade II listed Victorian building. A visit to the market is all about soaking up the atmosphere - and dropping into gastro pub Smiths opposite for a pint with the papers.

**Phone:** 020 7236 8734

**Timing:** Trading hours: Mondays to Fridays 4:00-12:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Farringdon Rail / Tube

William Patten Primary School, Stoke Newington Church Street, N16 0NX

## Stoke Newington Farmers' Market

❄️ All the produce at Stoke Newington Farmers' Market is organic, biodynamic or wild - and it was the first farmers' market in the UK to do so. It's a truly local market as all produce is sold by the people who grew, reared or produced it themselves and who come from within 100 miles of Hackney. The market was set up in May 2003 by Growing Communities, a social enterprise run by local people in Hackney, to enable residents in the borough to buy locally-produced food, managed in a way that benefits the environment. Participating farms include Stocks Farm in Essex, Ripple Farm and Perrycourt Farm, both in Kent. Such farms bring their in-season, organic produce into town every Saturday including greenhouse salad leaves, aubergines and peppers, organically farmed trout, lamb and chicken. The great benefit of buying direct from the people who produced your food is that you not only get the freshest of food stuffs but you also leave with a satisfied smile, knowing that you've made a small but significant victory over the supermarket giants.

**Phone:** 020 7502 7588

**Timing:** Saturdays 10:00-14:30

**Nearest Station:** Manor House Tube

# Traditional Toys

Ditch the downloads and Nintendo DSs, and fill your child's stocking with a collection of bright, long-lasting traditional toys this Christmas. From dolls houses to rocking horses, wooden playthings to magic tricks, London's independent toy shops are brimming with sturdy, well-made and aesthetically pleasing trinkets. Many of our chosen shops are also a joy to visit and offer a range of in-house events and activities for children to help distract them while you shop.

44 The Market, Covent Garden

## Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop

❄️ This tiny shop in the heart of Covent Garden is crammed full of traditional toys but is probably most famous for its selection of toy theatres which range in price from £6 to £80. Wend your way up the spiral staircase and wallow in a wonderland which comes across as a real box of delights. Keep a look-out for the traditional Jack in the Boxes, Russian dolls, marionettes, glove puppets and toy soldiers. This is pure nostalgia and if you're after a unique, well-made and long-lasting gift for youngsters or for any toy-loving adult then Benjamin Pollock's should be on your shopping list. Covent Garden Market itself is a real treat at Christmas with street artists warming up the winter-chilled crowds, decorations and lights adorning the piazza, and stalls serving up traditional Christmas fayre. If you're up for a really festive day, time your visit to coincide with a carol concert at nearby St Paul's Church ('The Actors' Church').

**Phone:** 020 7379 7866

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:30-18:00, Sun 11:00-16:00

**Nearest Station:** Covent Garden Tube

140 Columbia Road, E2 7RG

## Bob & Blossom

❄️ Only open on a Sunday, when the flower market takes over the area, Bob & Blossom offers a traditional and uncomplicated range of quality toys. Crocheted elephants, colourful wooden blocks, spinning tops, miniature cars and knitted rattles are regular staples. Inside candy-striped gifts boxes - perfect at Christmas time - are a range of bits and bobs just for babies. Their popular range of kids' clothing is also worth a peek. Combine your toy-buying trip with a wander along the flower-filled market, and stock up on festive blooms, wreaths and a tree while you're at it.

**Phone:** 020 7739 4737

**Timing:** Sun 9:00-15:00

**Nearest Station:** Shoreditch Tube

202 Kensington Park Road, W11 1NR

## Cheeky Monkeys

❄️ Ideally placed to attract the hordes of yummy mummies in west London, this, the original Cheeky Monkeys store, sources eye-catching and original gifts that aim to encourage children to use their minds and run with their imagination rather than just sit in front of games consoles drooling. Right from the start their aim has been to make shopping here as diverse and interesting an experience as possible without compromising on quality and durability and they've managed to stick to this precept. You'll see plenty of fun and stylish wooden toys - but hardly any plastic. And there are gifts to suit all pockets, ranging from fun items for Christmas stockings to big bonanza-type treats that Santa might have trouble squeezing into his sack. Unlike many other similar stores their range of activity toys serves children up to 12 years. Enjoy the store and then take a wander along nearby Portobello Road Market for some more Christmas shopping opportunities.

**Phone:** 020 7792 9022

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 9:30-17:30,  
Sat 10:00-17:30, Sun 11:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Ladbroke Grove Tube

181 King's Road, SW3 5EB

## Daisy & Tom

❄️ Chelsea mothers wouldn't dream of buying their children's Christmas pressies at Argos, allowing this old world toyshop to find its niche. Bright colours, traditional toys, in-house events and a relaxed atmosphere make this great for kids as well as parents keen to get the seasonal shopping done - the approachable staff really know their stuff too. An instore carousel (weekdays 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm and on the hour at weekends), regular colouring activities in the Book Room, and four daily puppet productions of 'Peter and the Wolf' keep the kids happy while parents get to work on the Christmas list and browse a fine mixture of luxury and high street toys. For nippers in need of clippers an in-house hairdressing service is also on hand to trim your tots in time for the festive photo. A modern take on a traditional mould, this is how 21st century toy shops should be. Handily located on the designer shopping Mecca that is The King's Road, you'll be well-placed to carry on gift-buying, admire the lights or, alternatively, wander down to the Royal Court for a spot of drama.

**Phone:** 020 7352 5000

**Timing:** Mon, Tue & Thu 9:30-18:00, Wed 10:00-19:00

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

7 Charing Cross Tube Shopping Arcade, WC2N 4HZ

## Davenport's Magic Shop

❄️ From budding Harry Potters and bumbling Tommy Coopers to dynamic David Copperfields, Davenport's is a haven for magicians of every level and ability. Non-magicians too are guaranteed a spellbinding time wandering around this cavern of tricks. The oldest, family-run magic business in the world (allegedly), this is a friendly, fun environment in which to while away a Christmas present-buying afternoon. Rummage through the diverse collection (from limited edition collectables to books, cards and accessories) and enjoy the well-executed demonstrations from their team of magic

professionals. Concentrate hard enough and you can take what you've learnt back home to entertain the troops on Christmas Day (you might even find a trick for making the washing-up disappear...). Informed and truly interesting this is a unique gem in an unexpected corner of the city centre. When you've finished wave your magic wand in the direction of Villiers Street and disappear underground into the dusty depths of Gordon's for a restorative glass of wine and a chunk of cheese.

**Phone:** 020 7836 0408

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 9:30-17:30, Sat 10:30-16:30

**Nearest Station:** Charing Cross Tube / Rail

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24 Cheshire Street, E2 6EH

## F-art Gallery and Shop

❄️ An untraditional venue for sourcing traditional toys, F-art is a unique space - part gallery and part shop - located in London's arty East End. It's only open at weekends and by appointment on Fridays so you need to time your visit carefully. A mix of genuinely vintage and modern toys can be found amid the original and contemporary works by artists (sculptors, illustrators, printers). Toy cars, domino sets, wooden mice, hula hooping bunnies, knitting bears and reindeer-riding Santa Clauses mingle with artworks and unusual items of furniture including lights and chairs. This isn't your "standard" traditional toyshop - wandering around here is much like exploring a gallery or museum - but if you're after something unique or an antique toy and are interested in art, then this might be just the place for you. Carry on the art-trail at one of the many nearby galleries including Hauser & Worth Coppermill or the Brick Lane Gallery. Nearby Dennis Severs' House museum is also well-worth a visit - especially during December when they hold their Silent Night - Annual Christmas Installation.

**Phone:** 020 7729 5411

**Timing:** Sat 13:00-17:00, Sun 10:30-17:00. Fri by appointment.

**Nearest Station:** Whitechapel Tube

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87-135 Brompton Road, Knightsbridge, SW1X 7XL

## Harrods

❄️ It'll be packed and full of tourists but, if you can cope with this, Harrods has its finger on the pulse of traditional toys and has a range big enough to ensure that you find everything you've got jotted down on your Christmas list... and a few more besides. From pirate ships to Power Rangers, quad bikes to croquet sets, and trampolines to Teddy bears they house probably the best overall range of children's toys in the city, if not the country. Unlike many of London's other department stores, Harrods does Christmas really well and their Toy Kingdom is no exception. If you're going with the family, book the children in for an "appointment" with Santa. You can do it in advance using their website, by calling 020 783 8877, or via the ticket desk on the 4th floor. Weekend appointments have all gone now but they still have some available for during the week. Obviously this isn't the place to come for bargain basement buys but if you're after a one-stop, Christmas toy shop then this is the place to come. Hyde Park with its Christmas ice rink and festive Winter Wonderland is just a short walk away, so if you're in need of a bit of fresh air and space after your department store frenzy you've not got far to go.

\*If you're coming to Harrods by Tube take the pedestrian

tunnel that leads straight from the platform to the entrance of the store.

**Phone:** 020 7730 1234

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00 - 20:00, Sun 12:00 - 18:00

**Nearest Station:** Knightsbridge Tube

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267 Portobello Road, W11 1LR

## Honeyjam

❄️ A replica toy Aga is, apparently, this uber trendy toyshop's best-selling item - hardly surprising given the store's proximity to Notting Hill, but applying a quirky take on a traditional model is what Honeyjam does best. Retro toys from the Thirties through to the Eighties sit alongside vintage toys as well as fair trade, sustainably made, and eco-friendly play things. This Christmas, for sickly sweet stocking fillers, try the cup-cake lipgloss for girls, while for boys the Space Boy Flashlight torch is guaranteed to light up a few faces. The brainchild of Irish model Jasmine Guinness (nickname 'Jam') and lifelong friend Honey Bowdrey, Honeyjam evolved because the two women couldn't find toys they wanted for their kids. They seem to have hit upon a winner and now stock some of the best-looking toys in town - look out for their bright pink and green wooden tea set, worthy of any west London pad.

**Phone:** 020 7243 0449

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-18:00, Sun 11:00-16:00

**Nearest Station:** Ladbroke Grove Tube

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12 Flask Walk, NW3 1HE

## Mystical Fairies

❄️ The Christmas Fairy is alive and well and living in... Hampstead. For little fairy fanatics (mostly the females in your family), this shop is the ideal place to pick up the perfect winged friend for a festive treat. Many of the toys are suspended from the ceiling on delicate silver branches, while at Christmas extra special decorations and themes adorn the interior. If you've got the little-uns in tow throughout your shopping trip, direct them towards the dressing-up corner where they can transform themselves into all manner of magical fairy guises (there's even a special wizard corner in the dressing-up section for boys who can don their pointy hats and fight off the fairy dust with their wands). Fairy makeovers (£3.50 and £8) are available every day, while their ever-popular Fairy Schools take place on 18th, 19th and 20th December from 10:30am to 1pm. You can gather some gifts for the tree while your youngsters learn the complicated art of "fairyng".

\*Please note: despite the few concessions made towards the male of the species, this really is very much a haven for little girls so if you've got hoards of boisterous boys you might want to find alternative entertainment for them or at least take them for a wild run-around on nearby Hampstead Heath afterwards.

**Phone:** 020 7431 1888

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-18:00. Sun 11:00-18:00

**Nearest Station:** Hampstead Tube

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3 Mildhurst Parade, Fortis Green, N10 3EJ

## Never Never Land

❄️ The name alone betrays this enchanting shop's magical appeal. A tiny rectangle of a toy store, it is crammed to the ceiling with heaps of old fashioned delights which really

come into their own at Christmas. The dolls' houses are a treat - high-quality structures with individually sold knick-knacks that actually fit together. The minute tiny china sets, cradles, baby dolls and rocking horses are finished with an intricate detail that is hard to find these days. The devoted owner is particularly expert at seeking out unusual wooden toys - keep an eye out for the cute, dancing musical frogs. An enchanting harbour of innocence, this shop is a lovely place in which to pick-up toys for Christmas stockings and entertain the kids at the same time.

**Phone:** 020 8883 3997

**Timing:** Tue, Wed, Thu & Sat 10:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** East Finchley Tube

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15 St Christopher's Place, W1U 1NR

## Petit Chou

❄️ This tasteful toyshop, catering for children from 0 to 10 years, was opened in 2005 by Marty St James and Iveta Petrakova who quickly became famous for their elegant array of handcrafted toys from all over the world. Ranging from skittles and wooden pull-along toys, to cuddly creatures and less-cuddly buildings, these well-made items are sturdy enough to withstand the rough and tumble of the playroom - you can knock them over again and again and again without fear of scuffing. The German Moorland sheep and wooden ride-on cat walker are very popular ideas for wholesome, unique Christmas presents. Give them a bash.

**Phone:** 020 7486 3637

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:30-18:30, Sun 12noon-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Bond Street Tube

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1 Scala Street, W1T 2HN

## Pollock's Toy Museum and Shop

❄️ Crammed inside two townhouses (one 18th, the other 19th century) on a pretty side street you'll find this historic homage to toys of all kinds. Named after Benjamin Pollock, a creator and printer of Victorian toy theatres, the museum now boasts a diverse range of toys from all over the world. Follow the trail up three winding staircases and you'll stumble across battered and bruised century-old bears to a 4000-year-old Egyptian clay mouse. Dolls, dolls' houses, a Victorian nursery, toy theatres, tin toys and folk toys from around the world make up the rest of the collection. You can't actually buy these items but on the ground floor there's a cool toy shop packed with colourful treats for you to take home and wrap up for the kids. It's free to wander around the toyshop but there is a small admission charge for the museum. Live toy theatre performances take place during school holidays so if you've got the children in tow you might want to settle them in front of a performance while you grab a few bits in the shop. Full of character and charm this is a great place to while away a few nostalgic hours and pick up some pressies into the bargain.

The British Museum's only a short walk away so you can carry on your cultural foray into the past with a quick tour followed by more present-buying in the museum's shop, which is also stocked with unique items (including a Harry Potter chess set and Egyptian mummy masks).

**Phone:** 020 7636 3452

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-17:00

**Pricing:** Museum: £3 (Adults), £2 (Students), £1.50 (3-16 yrs), Free (Under 3s) | Shop: Free

**Nearest Station:** Goadge Street Tube

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111b Commercial Street, Spitalfields, E1 6BG

## Queens

❄️ Kitsch, colourful, cute and cuddly this glitzy gift grotto in Spitalfields is irresistible. Wander around its magical wonderland and make friends with flirting fairies, kissing fish, perky-eyed reindeer and nut-cracker busting squirrels. Christmas time is when Queens really comes into its own. Alive with the sights, sounds and smells of the season, head here and indulge in some old-fashioned gaudy glamour.

The perfect antidote to the high street, there's always loads going on at the quaint, covered Spitalfields Market, with galleries, stalls, shops, restaurants and bars all competing for the attention of visitors. Sunday is the best time to visit if you want the full complement of stalls and Christmas shopping opportunities.

**Timing:** Tue to Fri 11:00-18:00,

Sat 12 noon-17:00, Sun 10:00-18:00

**Nearest Station:** Aldgate East Tube

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Chelsea Green, 53 Godfrey Street, SW3 3SX

## Traditional Toys

❄️ In between the Fulham Road and The King's Road, down a quiet side street, Traditional Toys is a treasure trove of wooden playthings: cars, trains, planes, helicopters, trucks, puzzles and building blocks, all beautifully crafted. These are timeless toys that won't need to be replaced just because the next Buzz Lightyear has come along, and they all qualify as top-notch Christmas gifts. A genuinely cool store, Traditional Toys stocks the total antithesis of all the plastic, battery-powered playthings that saturate the toy market today but land high on the toy scrapheap tomorrow. Everything from beautiful castles to musical boxes, Peter Rabbit to Winnie the Pooh is here.

The V&A, the Natural History Museum (and ice rink) and the Science Museum are all within walking distance if you fancy a break from toy shopping.

**Phone:** 020 7352 1718

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 10:00 - 17:30, Sat 10:00 - 18:00

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

# Carols & Services

Music has always been at the heart of a British Christmas and London typifies this tuneful fascination. Charitable singers gather on street corners, church congregations swell and concert halls welcome world-class performers. Get inside some of the city's finest venues, including historical landmarks like Westminster Abbey and the Royal Albert Hall, or simply gather around the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square and join the rest of London for a good old fashioned round of carols...

5 Sloane Terrace, SW1X 9DQ

## Cadogan Hall

❄️ Cadogan Hall is a good spot for a festive concert. The Byzantine-style former church has an appropriately Middle Eastern Christian feel, which combines with the always-impressive lights along Kings Road to give things a thoroughly seasonal feel. Here are some programme highlights and additional dates...

**Phone:** 020 7730 4500

**Date:** Tuesday 11th - Thursday 20th December 2007

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

### Christmas at Cadogan with Kit and the Widow

"No carols. No mulled wine. No elves. Merry Christmas" A refreshing alternative to the season's traditional formats and tunes, lounge act, Kit and the Widow, offers a wry, funny, at times caustic, cabaret take on Christmas. A smattering of tunes, some tinkling of the ivories, a sprinkling of jokes and camp banter make up this evening's "Christmas with an edge" entertainment.

**Date:** Wednesday 12th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Pricing:** £15-£28

### Christmas Cracker

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Nick Davies, perform a populist programme full of seasonal favourites, including Humperdinck's 'Hansel & Gretel Overture', Tchaikovsky's 'The Skaters' Waltz', 'Mary's Boy Child' and 'Winter Wonderland'. Vocalists Mary Carewe and Michael Dore lead the singing with the audience invited to join in at instances throughout.

**Date:** Wednesday 19th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Pricing:** £10-£35

### Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with the Joyful Company of Singers

Traditional Christmas songs from all over the world, including the Basque area, Czechoslovakia and France, and festive

classical music, mix with some favourite English carols in this robust concert. A packed evening full of familiar tunes contrasted with some unusual additions, you're guaranteed to come out singing.

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Pricing:** £10-£35

### Additional Dates:

#### John Lewis Partnership Music Society's Annual Christmas Concert

**Date:** Tuesday 11th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Price:** £5 (Adults), £3 (Children and Concs)

#### Carols at Cadogan with The Bach Choir

**Date:** Friday 14th and Saturday 15th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30pm Friday 14th December | 11:00 (family concert) Saturday 15th December 2007.

**Price:** £10-£30

#### Orchestra of the Kiev Academic Music Theatre: A Celebration Concert for Christmas

**Date:** Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Price:** £12-£35

#### Orchestra of St John's: 'Peter and the Wolf' and 'The Snowman'

**Date:** Monday 17th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Price:** £15-£25

#### The King's Consort: Handel's 'Messiah'

**Date:** Tuesday 18th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Price:** £12-£32

Christ Church, E1 6LY

## Christ Church (Spitalfields Festival)

❄️ It's been an annual event for a long time now, but the Spitalfields Winter Festival is still going strong with a host of unique musical events which range from bell-ringing to gospel workshops, lunchtime concerts and carols to Medieval recitals and classical works. This varied programme of innovative music includes a musical and dramatic rendition of the adventures of Sinbad and 'Joglaresa' - an infectious programme of Medieval and traditional tunes guaranteed to get you in the Christmas mood. All concerts take place in and around the beautifully restored Christ Church in the heart of London's vibrant East End.

**Phone:** 020 7377 1362

**Date:** Wednesday 12th - Friday 21st December 2007

**Nearest Station:** Liverpool Street Tube/Rail

### Spitalfields Winter Festival Community Carol Service

Always one of the highlights of the Spitalfields Festival is the annual Community Carol Service, with pupils from local schools and organisations performing with habitual gusto a lively programme of readings, carols and instrumental recitals. This year youngsters from the Tower Hamlets Saturday Music Centre and Sir John Cass's Foundation School and Centre perform alongside the Sing Gospel Singers. A heart-warming,

community event, the carol concert always attracts large, loyal crowds and plenty of good cheer. All proceeds go towards the Spitalfields Crypt Trust.

**Phone:** 020 7377 1362

**Date:** Tuesday 18th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Ham Street, Ham, Richmond-upon-Thames**

## Ham House

❄️ Resting on the banks of the Thames in outlying Richmond, the Great Hall of Ham House's magnificent 17th-century building forms an atmospheric venue for this annual series of carol concerts. The afternoon performances are family-orientated festive fiestas with a visit from Santa and presents for the young ones. The later concerts ('Timeless Carols') are accompanied by more revelry, with mulled wine and mince pies on offer in the remarkable 17th-century orangery during the interval.

The Kingston University Choir performs on Sunday 9th December, Mary Mogil and the Leon Singers entertain on Saturday 15th December, while the tones of Musica Divina directed by Simon Desbrulais fill the hall on the 16th. The programme covers a number of orations and showcase pieces, as well as the carols that everyone can join in with.

**Phone:** 0870 428 8933

**Date:** Sunday 9th, Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** Family Carol Concert: 15:00-16:30 Sun 9th, Sat 15th and Sun 16th Dec 2007 | Timeless Carols: 18:00-20:00 Sun 9th, Sat 15th and Sun 16th Dec 2007

**Pricing:** Family Carol Concert: £15 (Adults), £9 (Children). Timeless Carols: £22

**Nearest Station:** Richmond Tube/Rail

**Osterley Park, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 4RB**

## Osterley Park

❄️ The yard of Osterley Park's still-working Tudor stables is packed full of good cheer on Sunday afternoons in December as guests gather together outside for traditional carol services. For an additional charge visitors can step inside the house itself to catch a glimpse of how Osterley would have prepared for Christmas in days gone by.

Built in the 16th century, the house was completely revamped by Scottish architect Robert Adam two centuries later. The striking white pillar colonnade that fronts the house is just a taster of the fabulous neoclassical state rooms that exist inside. The house itself is set in 140 acres of gorgeous, verdant parkland complete with ornamental lakes and pleasure grounds. It's the perfect place to take a winter stroll and blow away all the cobwebs. Keep your eyes peeled for the ghost of a mysterious lady dressed in white rumoured to haunt the grounds.

**Phone:** 020 8232 5050

**Date:** Sundays 2nd, 9th and 16th December 2007

**Time:** 12:30-15:30 (carols at 14:00 and 15:00)

**Pricing:** Carol singing free. Entry to house £4.50 (Adults), £2 (Children), Free (Members)

**Nearest Station:** Osterley Tube

**Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7 2AP**

## Royal Albert Hall

❄️ One of the capital's most iconic music venues, this 19th century concert hall is famed for offering a wide variety of entertainments. Its Christmas programme is no exception, with a range of concerts to suit most tastes from the King's College Choir to a raucous, audience-led singalong. Here are a few highlights followed by some more dates...

**Phone:** 020 7589 8212

**Date:** Monday 10th - Monday 24th December 2007

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

### White Christmas 2007

White Christmas offers up a familiar set of seasonal songs from 'Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire' to 'A Winter Wonderland' and 'Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas'... A proper selection of old-time favourites, this'll have you swaying and singing in your seat before the first song has finished. Led by the London Concert Orchestra and the Capital Voices Choir and conducted by John Rigby, West End stars Jacinta Whyte and Gary Williams take on a range of solo performances. Another jolly, populist hit in the Royal Albert Hall's Christmas line-up.

**Date:** Saturday 15th December 2007

**Time:** 13:30 & 16:45

**Pricing:** £11-£34

### Christmas Carol Sing-Along 2007

Get involved and help raise the roof at this annual audience participation festive extravaganza. Every year an ebullient crowd is encouraged to join in and give their lungs a good workout as they belt their way through a stack of traditional, Christmas tunes. Accompanied by the London Concert Chorus and Orchestra and hosted by musical genius and 'Playschool' and 'Playaway' king, Jonathan Cohen, this is an informal, lighthearted event, which is traditionally full of atmosphere. This is always a staunchly populist "greatest hits" set, taking in anything from religious staples like 'O Come All Ye Faithful', to 'Rocking Around the Christmas Tree' and Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas'. Tickets for this London favourite are likely to sell out fast.

**Date:** Sunday 16th, Friday 21st and

Saturday 22nd December 2007

**Time:** Sun 16th at 14:30, Fri 21st at 14:30, Sat 22nd Dec at 13:30 & 16:45

**Pricing:** £11-£34.50

### Messiah 2007

It's not really Christmas in London without a performance of Handel's 'Messiah' and the Royal Albert Hall is always pleased to oblige. This year the choral masterpiece is performed by 500 voices from three top choirs, along with soloists and the superb Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Royal Albert Hall is a spectacular venue, a cathedral to the power of music, with one of the country's finest organs, and it is the perfect place for Handel's soaring redemptive hymn.

**Performers:** Royal Philharmonic Orchestra | Goldsmiths Choral Union | Highgate Choral Society | English Concert Chorus | Maria Plazas - Soprano | Jean Rigby - Mezzo | Timothy Robinson - Tenor | Henry Waddington - Bass | Brian Wright - Conductor

**Date:** Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30  
**Pricing:** £11-£42.50

### Royal Choral Society Christmas Carols

The Royal Choral Society brings a selection of traditional carols to the Royal Albert Hall this year. The programme includes, 'Once in Royal David's City', 'O Little Town of Bethlehem', 'Away in a Manger', 'The First Noel', 'God Rest You Merry Gentlemen', 'O Come, All Ye Faithful', and 'Hark! the Herald Angels Sing'. Conducted and introduced by Richard Cooke with John Birch (organ), the Fanfare Trumpeters of the Band of the Grenadier Guards and the London Concert Orchestra.

**Date:** Monday 17th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Pricing:** £11-£34.50

### King's College Choir

The world-famous choir of King's College Chapel presents what should be one of the best of this year's carols and classical music concerts. These concerts combine musical excellence and professionalism with a great deal of fun - the element of audience participation has a wonderful effect on the audience's appreciation of the music. From Vivaldi's 'Gloria' and Tchaikovsky's 'Waltz of the Flowers' to Rutter's 'Twelve Days of Christmas' and a special 150th anniversary tribute to Elgar, this year's programme promises something for all. Stephen Cleobury conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus with Sarah-Jane Davies (soprano) and Laura Parfitt (alto).

**Date:** Friday 21st December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Pricing:** £11-£42.50

### Additional Dates:

#### John Rutter's Christmas Celebration

**Date:** Monday 10th December 2007  
**Time:** 15:00 & 19:30  
**Price:** £10-£50

#### Clic Sergent Christmas Celebration

**Date:** Friday 14th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:00  
**Price:** £30-£50

#### Classic Carols

**Date:** Saturday 15th December 2007  
**Time:** 20:00  
**Price:** £11-£37.50

#### The BT Christmas Concert

**Date:** Tuesday 18th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** £11-£34.50

#### Christmas Classics

**Date:** Wednesday 19th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** £11-£37.50

#### Santa's Christmas Cracker

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007  
**Time:** 14:30  
**Price:** £11-£34.50

### The Glory of Christmas

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** £11-£34.50

### Carols by Candlelight

**Date:** Saturday 22nd December - Monday 24th (Christmas Eve) 2007  
**Time:** Sat 22nd 20:00, Sun 23rd 13:00, 16:30 & 20:00, Sat 24th (Christmas Eve) 14:30 & 19:00  
**Price:** £11-£39.50

**Belvedere Road, SE1 8XX**

## Southbank Centre: Carols with Voicelab

❄️ One of a number of festive events taking in and around the Southbank Centre in December, this robust carol singalong promises to be an energetic raucous evening. With a set that can be described as "traditional with a twist", expect some old favourites mixed up with some unexpected additions. Decorated in suitably festive fashion by set designer and associate artist, Michael Vale, the Ballroom forms the venue for this fun, free, seasonal sing-song. Song sheets provided.

**Phone:** 0871 663 2501 |  
**Venue:** Southbank Centre  
**Date:** Friday 14th December 2007  
**Time:** 18:30  
**Pricing:** Free  
**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube/Rail

**London Bridge, SE1 9DA**

## Southwark Cathedral

❄️ Dating back to the 13th century Southwark Cathedral is the oldest Gothic church in the city and boasts a colourful history (look out for the monuments to Edmund Shakespeare - the Bard's brother - and playwright John Fletcher) which goes towards forming a fine setting for a series of atmospheric annual services and concerts. There are various carol concerts (almost every other day) and seasonal services on throughout the month but here are some highlights and a couple of notable dates for your diary...

**Phone:** 020 7367 6700 |  
**Date:** Thursday 13th - Christmas Day 2007  
**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

### Celebrate Christmas with Goldsmiths Choral Union

Regular performers at some of the London's most high-profile classical music venues, the Goldsmiths Choral Union choir entertain with a mix of seasonal songs and readings. Held in the auspicious surroundings of Southwark Cathedral the venue promises to match the standard of the singing. Audience members are encouraged to join in with this festive programme, conducted by Brian Wright.

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Pricing:** £15 (Adults), £5 (Children)

### Midnight Mass

The mother church for the Anglican Diocese of Southwark, the cathedral attracts a huge crowd each year for its Midnight

Mass despite the parish being comparatively small in terms of residents. Make sure you arrive early, approach the cathedral via a walk along the river if you have time, and enjoy the build-up to this joyous celebration.

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 23:30 - arrive early to secure a space

**Pricing:** Free

**Additional Dates:**

**Marie Curie Cancer Care Carol Concert**

**Date:** Thursday 13th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Phone:** 020 7599 7777

**The Sinfonia Soi Orchestra from Finland**

**Date:** Saturday 15th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Phone:** 020 7237 1245

**Cathedral Sing-In**

**Date:** Monday 18th December 2007

**Time:** 12:45

**Phone:** 020 7367 6717

**Cathedral Choir Concert**

**Date:** Thursday 21st December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Phone:** 020 7367 6717

**Cathedral Carol Service (\*not suitable for children)**

**Date:** Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

**Phone:** 020 7367 6717

**Building the Crib Service**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 16:00

**Phone:** 020 7367 6700

**Eucharist with Carols**

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 9:00

**Phone:** 020 7367 6700

**Choral Eucharist**

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 11:00

**Phone:** 020 7367 6700

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Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7HY

## St George's Cathedral

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❄️ This friendly venue in south London has an atmosphere that is traditionally jovial with a real sense of celebration during many of its services - something which really comes to the forefront at Christmas. In the heart of multicultural London, St George's has a diverse, multicultural congregation and a special Christmas Day service in Spanish. See below for a couple of their major events and a list of seasonal services...

**Phone:** 020 7928 5256

**Date:** Wednesday 12th - Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Nearest Station:** Lambeth North Tube

### A Celebration for Advent

Renowned for its fine choral tradition St George's resident choir is often used for television and radio broadcasts.

Displaying their talents via a range of carols and seasonal songs during this special Advent service, audience members are invited to join in with the celebration.

**Date:** Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** 4pm

### Midnight Mass, Christmas Carols and Readings

The hub of south London's cosmopolitan, Roman Catholic community puts on one of London's most renowned Midnight Masses every year. The atmosphere here is traditionally jovial and there's a real sense of celebration and old fashioned cheer as carols echo up into the vaults. Renowned for its fine choral tradition the celebrations here were broadcast on the BBC in 2004 popularising this inspiring service and attracting thousands every year to welcome in Christmas Day with song and prayer.

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 23:30

**Pricing:** Free

**Additional Dates:**

### Catholic Children's Society Carol Service

**Date:** Wednesday 12th December 2007

**Time:** 16:00

### Children's Crib Service

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 15:30

### Vigil Mass of the Nativity

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 18:00

### Mass with Carols

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 8:00

### Family Mass with the Archbishop

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 10:00

### Solemn Mass

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 11:30

### Mass in Spanish

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 13:00

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Trafalgar Square, WC2N 4JJ

## St Martin-in-the-Fields

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❄️ Situated right in the middle of the city you might imagine St Martin-in-the-Fields to be a somewhat impersonal venue, but actually with its "ever-open" door the parish has a surprisingly welcoming, community feel about it and no more so than at Christmas. In centuries past the congregation has enjoyed concerts from talents like Handel and Mozart. This December there are a range of new talents on show. Here are some musical highlights and special seasonal services...

**Phone:** 020 7839 8362 |

**Date:** Sunday 2nd - Tuesday 25th December

(Christmas Day) 2007

**Nearest Station:** Charing Cross Tube / Rail

### **Christmas Four Seasons with Audience Carols**

Over the course of an early December eve, the London Musical Arts Ensemble weave a glorious blend of Vivaldi's masterpiece with Corelli's Christmas Concerto, Pachelbel's Canon and Gigue and some traditional Christmas carols. The Ensemble has been stalwarts at St Martin's since 1992 and, with conductor John Landor still at the helm, this concert promises to be a combination of sing-a-long fun and fleet, fresh finesse.

**Date:** Saturday 8th December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Pricing:** £7-£26

### **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**

Relive the story of the Nativity with the help of readings, carols and choral music. A family service, this is bound to be a popular event, and deservedly so for the choir here are excellent and the location and setting next to none. Pop over to the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square afterwards for some more festive cheer.

**Date:** Wednesday 19th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

### **Additional Dates:**

#### **Advent Carol Service**

**Date:** Sunday 2nd December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

#### **Advent Taize**

**Date:** Sunday 9th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

#### **Community Carols**

**Date:** Tuesday 11th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

#### **Evening Prayer with Carols**

**Date:** Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Time:** 17:00

#### **Crib Family Service**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 14:30

#### **Parish Carol Service**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 18:30

#### **Midnight Mass**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 23:30

#### **Christmas Day Eucharist**


**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 10:30

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St Paul's Churchyard, EC4M 8AD

## **St Paul's Cathedral**

 Built by Sir Christopher Wren after the fire, St Paul's is viewed by many as the spiritual home of Great Britain. It's also a very popular place to experience the more

traditional side of Christmas. This year, to meet demand, St Paul's is hosting a series of concerts throughout the month of December peaking with the excessively popular Midnight Mass service and carol concert. The cathedral's great dome which dominates much of the City fills with the sound of the Cathedral Choir for a large part of the month and most special services and concerts are free and available to all. See below for some highlight events and a list of dates for your diary...

**Phone:** 020 7236 4128

**Date:** Saturday 8th - Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Nearest Station:** St Paul's Tube

### **Messiah**

Synonymous with Christmas, Handel's 'Messiah', performed by the Cathedral Choir and Chorus and the City of London Sinfonia in the imposing St Paul's Cathedral, has to be one of the highlights of the season. It's free to attend but you need to apply for tickets by writing to: Messiah Tickets, The Chapter House, London, EC4M 8AD. As you can imagine this is an unbelievably popular event so if you want to attend get your letter posted (with a SAE) as soon as you can.

**Date:** Wednesday 12th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

**Price:** Free but tickets required

### **A Celebration of Christmas**

Celebrity readers perform alongside the St Paul's Cathedral Choir and the City of London Sinfonia in this traditional concert of carols and narrated excerpts. It's free and everyone's welcome but space is limited so get there as early as you can to secure a seat in this formidable venue.

**Date:** Wednesday 19th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

**Price:** Free but space is limited

### **Family Carols (Christingle)**

A short-ish service to suit families, this is a traditional, friendly, pre-Christmas Day celebration with carols performed by the Cantate Youth Choir. Kids are positively encouraged to attend this special service during which Christingles (oranges wrapped in red ribbon and skewered with a lit candle and four cocktail sticks laden with sweets and fruit) are given out. Symbolising the world, the light of Jesus, the love of Christ and the four seasons, Christingles are rarely seen in seasonal services so this one in St Paul's offers a unique chance for families to explore another custom associated with this festive season.

**Date:** Saturday 22nd December 2007

**Time:** 13:00

### **Additional Dates:**

#### **Ceremony of Carols by Benjamin Britten**

**Date:** Saturday 8th December 2007

**Time:** 17:00

**Price:** Free and unticketed

#### **Sankta Lucia Carol Service**

**Date:** Friday 14th December 2007

**Time:** 18:30

**Price:** Tickets required. See [www.swedish-church.org.uk](http://www.swedish-church.org.uk)

#### **La Nativité du Seigneur by Oliver Messiaen (recital)**

**Date:** Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** 18:00  
**Price:** Free and unticketed

### **Christmas Carol Service (sung by the Cathedral Choir)**

**Date:** Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th December  
(Christmas Eve) 2007  
**Time:** 16:00  
**Price:** Free and unticketed

### **Midnight Eucharist**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007  
**Time:** 23:30  
**Price:** Free and unticketed

### **Christmas Day Services**


**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007  
**Times:** 8:00, 11:00 15:15  
**Price:** Free and unticketed

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Bedford Street, WC2E 9ED

## **St Paul's Church**

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 An attractive, Inigo Jones-designed church (c.1633) positioned right opposite Covent Garden's market and piazza, St Paul's forms a suitably atmospheric setting for a series of festive concerts and services this Christmas. Included below are a couple of highlights followed by some additional dates for your diary...

**Phone:** 020 7836 5221  
**Date:** Saturday 1st - Tuesday 25th December  
(Christmas Day) 2007  
**Nearest Station:** Covent Garden Tube

### **Concordia Foundation Candlelit Christmas Concert**

A good smattering of traditional carols combined with familiar classical pieces capture the essence of Christmas over the ages in this family-oriented Christmas concert. Introduced by international soprano Gillian Humphrys and starring a number of accomplished young musicians and a mystery celebrity guest speaker, the accessible programme combines works from Purcell to Puccini, Handel to Saint Saëns. All proceeds go to the Concordia Foundation.

**Phone:** 020 7925 2545  
**Date:** Saturday 1st December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** £11 & £15

### **A Star for Christmas**

Most familiarly referred to as 'The Actors' Church', Covent Garden's St Paul's is the ideal venue for this celebrity-filled, Christmas carol concert in aid of Help the Aged. Performing a range of seasonally-inspired solo songs, readings and group arrangements, a bevy of old-school thespians - from Lionel Blair to Liz Smith - do their bit for charity supported by the RADA Choir. This should be a fun evening, finished off with drinks and nibbles and the chance for a bit of schmoozing. Tickets are bound to sell fast so we recommend you book early.

**Phone:** 020 7239 1922  
**Date:** Wednesday 5th December 2007  
**Time:** 18:30  
**Price:** £25

### **Traditional Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight**

With a cast of professional actors performing readings from

the King James Bible alongside costumed musicians this colourful, dramatised service should prove popular with families, locals and tourists alike. If you're planning on attending make sure you arrive early to get a space.

**Date:** Sunday 16th December 2007  
**Time:** 16:00  
**Price:** Free

### **Additional Dates:**

### **Christian Aid Advent Hope Carol Service**

**Date:** Thursday 29th November 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Phone:** 020 7523 2105  
**Price:** £5

### **Prisoners' Education Trust Annual Advent Carol Service**

**Date:** Monday 3rd December 2007  
**Time:** 18:30  
**Phone:** 020 8848 7760  
**Price:** £12.50

### **Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra Christmas Concert**

**Date:** Saturday 8th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** Free

### **Advent Carol Service with The Choir of St Paul's Church**

**Date:** Sunday 9th December 2007  
**Time:** 18:00  
**Price:** Free

### **Vasari Singers and the Musicians Benevolent Fund Christmas Carol Concert**

**Date:** Friday 14th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:00  
**Price:** TBA

### **Camerata Santa Dorotea Christmas Concert**

**Date:** Saturday 15th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:30  
**Price:** TBA

### **Covent Garden Community Association Christmas Carols**

**Date:** Monday 17th December 2007  
**Time:** 18:30  
**Price:** Free

### **The Food Chain Christmas Carol Service**

**Date:** Tuesday 18th December 2007  
**Time:** 19:00  
**Price:** Free

### **Christmas Concert by The Knack Singers**

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007  
**Time:** 13:00  
**Price:** Free

### **Parish Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Date:** Sunday 23rd December 2007  
**Time:** 11:00

### **The Midnight Mass of Christmas**

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007  
**Time:** 23:30

## Parish Mass for Christmas Day

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 11:00

Sutton House, E9 6JQ

## Sutton House

❄️ East London's oldest private house presents a pair of carol concerts on the middle Saturday of December; one an evening concert, the other a cheerful, family sing-song affair. After the evening concert in the house's glorious Wenlock Barn, guests are invited to take a look around the rest of this marvellously preserved, 16th-century building.

Sutton House was built in 1535 for Sir Rafe Sadleir, Principal Secretary of State for Henry VIII, and has seen many alterations throughout its near half-millennium history. Inside, the original oak panelling, painted staircase, carved fireplaces and Jacobean paintings are a feast for the eyes, not to mention the mural left by squatters during the 1980s. Sing away and then experience some of London's rich past, warm your hands around a piping glass of mulled wine and usher in the festive spirit.

**Phone:** 0870 428 8933

**Date:** Saturday 15th December 2007

**Time:** 17:00-18:30 (Family Concert), 19:30-21:00 (Evening Concert)

**Pricing:** £6.00 (Adults), £3.50 (Children)

**Nearest Station:** Hackney Central Rail

Trafalgar Square, WC2N 5DS

## Trafalgar Square

❄️ For over half a century Trafalgar Square has been adorned with a majestic Christmas tree - an annual gift from the people of Oslo, thanking Britain for support and friendship during World War Two. The evergreen - perhaps the most famous in the world - is an integral part of Christmas in London and is always a prime specimen, towering high alongside Nelson and decorated only with authentic white lights. Singing groups and passers-by join around the tree every evening to sing carols and soak up the Christmas cheer. On some evenings the angelic voices of the St Martin-in-the-Fields choir lead the tune. This is a wonderful spot to capture the spirit of Christmas.

**Venue:** Trafalgar Square

**Date:** Monday 10th - Sunday 23rd December 2007 (\*there are no carols on Tuesday 11th December)

**Time:** Daily 17:00-21:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Charing Cross Tube / Rail

Parliament Square, SW1P 3PA

## Westminster Abbey

❄️ Stunning Gothic architecture, the artistic talent that went into the statues, murals, paintings and tombs, and the fantastic stained glass, combine to make Westminster Abbey the most enduringly stunning of London's churches and a treasure trove of royal history. An absolutely dazzling setting for Christmas worship and concerts, all are welcome to attend events and services at this iconic venue. Just make sure you either book your ticket or grab your seat as early as possible as they are VERY popular. Here are a couple of this year's

highlights followed by a list of their special seasonal services...

**Phone:** 020 7222 5152

**Date:** Sunday 2nd - Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Nearest Station:** Westminster Tube

### Classic FM Music Makers Charity Christmas Concert

The setting of every coronation since 1066, Westminster Abbey doubles up as a fabulous venue for their annual Christmas charity concert. Conducted by James O'Donnell, the huge vaults of this stunning Gothic venue play host this year to the crystal clear sounds of The Choir of Westminster Abbey and organist Robert Quinney for a traditional programme of carols and seasonally-themed readings. One of the highlights of the evening, guest soloist, Welsh Baroque soprano Elin Manahan-Thomas, performs Handel's 'Rejoice Greatly' from 'Messiah', while Classic FM presenters Simon Bates, Jane Jones and Jamie Crick lead the readings.

**Phone:** 0870 841 1111

**Date:** Thursday 13th December 2007

**Time:** 19:00

**Pricing:** £14-£28. Seat with no view £5.

### Midnight Mass at Westminster Abbey

Pack inside one of London's most famous landmarks for an old-fashioned service to take you right through to Christmas Day. Westminster Abbey has been at the centre of royal and religious life in Britain since the time of William the Conqueror who was crowned here on Christmas Day 1066, following the successful Norman invasion of the British Isles. It's easy to lose sight of what Christmas is all about in the sea of commercialisation, but perched in the majestic history of the Abbey's nave will help remind you of the religious message. These awe-inspiring surroundings provide a striking backdrop for an evening of lessons and carols.

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 23:30 (but it's best to arrive at least an hour early due to this event's massive popularity). Pricing: Free

### Special Seasonal Services:

#### Advent Carols and Readings by Candlelight

**Date:** Sunday 2nd December 2007

**Time:** 16:00

#### A Christmas Meditation with Music & Readings

**Date:** Sunday 23rd December 2007

**Time:** 17:45pm

#### Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 16:00

#### Christmas Day Festal Evensong

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007

**Time:** 15:00

42 Francis Street, SW1P 1QW

## Westminster Cathedral: A Christmas Celebration

❄️ With plain walls and simple candlelight juxtaposed against colourful mosaics and marbles, London's

striking neo-Byzantine Roman Catholic cathedral provides an atmospheric backdrop for this festive musical celebration. Westminster Cathedral boasts one of the best young choirs in the capital (if not the country). Their performance at this annual event combined with impressive arrangements and the venue's excellent acoustics breathe new life to those old classics and make this one of the most popular Christmas concerts in the festive calendar.

**Phone:** 020 7798 9096

**Date:** Thursday 20th December 2007

**Nearest Station:** Victoria Tube / Rail

**Additional Dates:**

### Christmas Eve Services

**Date:** Monday 24th December (Christmas Eve) 2007

**Time:** 18:00 Vigil Mass and Carols for Families | 23:30 Vigil Mass and Carols

### Christmas Day Services

**Date:** Tuesday 25th December (Christmas Day) 2007


**Time:** 9:00 Mass with Carols | 12:00 midday Sung Mass with Carols

# Ice Rinks

When winter approaches the best way to embrace the cold is on the ice. Dodging young tearaways who can go backwards faster than you can go forwards is one sure way to warm up. As much a part of the build-up to Christmas as mulled wine and mince pies, taking to the ice is a great way to get in the festive mood. And now you can slip-slide around in the most magnificent historical settings as many of the city's most spectacular parks and buildings open up temporary ice rinks. It really is a fabulously festive experience. In the past the delightful rink at Somerset House dominated the skating scene. However, there are now ice rinks popping up all over the capital. This year, a vast new rink at The O2 provides a welcome indoor option. But for a more scenic skate, the Tower of London, the Natural History Museum and the rink next to Windsor Castle are among the best options. A bracing session of skating may leave you a little rosy cheeked but you'll soon warm up with a steaming cup of hot chocolate - or something stronger - at one of the rink-side cafés. Delightful, magical and very Christmass-y.

**Alexandra Palace, N22 7AY**

## Alexandra Palace Ice Rink

 The permanent ice rink at Alexandra Palace is a great place to go skating. And because it's indoors you can skate whatever the weather. There's a wide range of activities on offer suitable for all ages and covering every aspect of ice sports. You can take part in a ballet class or a dance club; regulars are welcome to join the Alexandra Palace Amateur Ice Skating Club and enter competitions on all levels. In

December, from 10th to 16th, local school children take part in the ice rink's annual pantomime production which this year tells the story of 'Cinderella on Ice'. It's a great community project with lots of help from the mums and dads. Tickets are available from 1st November for shows on 14th and 16th December by ringing 020 8365 4386 (or email [icerink@alexandrapalace.com](mailto:icerink@alexandrapalace.com) for further information).

**Phone:** 020 8365 4386

**Date:** 12th November 2007 - 20th January 2008


**Time:** Mon to Fri 11:00 - 13:30 & 14:00 - 17:30, Sat & Sun 10:30 - 12:30 & 14:00 - 16:30. Evening sessions: Fri to Sun 20:30 - 23:00.

**Pricing:** £6 (Adults - weekdays daytime), £7 (Adults - weekends & evenings), £5 (Children & Concs - daytime), £6 (Children & Concs - weekends)

**Nearest Station:** Wood Green Tube

**Broadgate Circle, EC2M 2QT**

## Broadgate Ice

 City workers can inject a bit of fun into their lunch break with a skate around this circular ice rink in Broadgate. Conveniently close to Spitalfields Market, it's also a great place for Christmas shoppers to take a break with a spin on the ice. For those who like team sports, however, Broomball is the main attraction of Broadgate Ice (6pm to 9pm on Mondays and Tuesdays). A bit like hockey but instead of curved sticks you get - you guessed it - a broom. And instead of skates you slide around in trainers which can be hazardous in the wrong hands (or feet). If this sounds like your kind of thing go to [www.broadgateice.co.uk/broomball](http://www.broadgateice.co.uk/broomball) and download the entry form to enter a team. The league begins in mid November and all first matches are completed by the second week of January. The top two in each league goes on to further stages culminating with the Grand Finals on Thursday 20th March 2008.

Broadgate Ice is also available for private hire every Wednesday and Thursday evening (for £450 + VAT per hour, including skating and Broomball equipment).

**Phone:** 020 7505 4120

**Date:** 3rd November 2007 - 20th March 2008


**Time:** Mon to Thu 12:00 - 14:30 & 15:30 - 17:30. Fri 12:00 - 14:30, 15:30 - 18:00 & 19:00 - 21:00. Sat & Sun 11:00 - 13:00, 14:00 - 16:00 & 17:00 - 19:00 (check with venue)

**Pricing:** £6 (Adults), £4 (Concs & Children Under 16). Skate hire: £2 (Adults), £1 (Children)

**Nearest Station:** Liverpool Street Tube / Rail

**Canada Square Park, E14 5AX**

## Canary Wharf Ice Rink

 Nestled amid the mirrored towers of Canary Wharf, a spectacular outdoor ice rink adds a cheerful dose of Christmas spirit to office life. Lit by hundreds of dainty lights, Canada Square Park is transformed into a fairy-tale Christmas kingdom. Boasting a 30m x 15m rink you and your chums can don winter garb and make like you're Torvill and Dean on the open ice. Don't worry if you're not quite Olympic Gold, topples and tumbles are expected. The Wharf's suited and booted office workers will, no doubt, be the primary type of skater you get here, sampling a little festive fun come five pm. But really it's meant for everyone so if it's romance you're after it doesn't get more starry eyed than a night on the ice. Finish the night off with a festive tippie or two from the rink-side cafe. Santa

will also be there in his Winter Cabin for the kids to tug at his beard and persuade him they've been good all year. A great way to get festive.

**Phone:** 0870 534 4444

**Date:** 17th November 2007 - 17th February 2008

**Time:** Mon to Sat 10:00 - 22:30, Sunday 10:00 - 20:00.

**Pricing:** £12 (Adults - peak), £10 (Adults - off-peak)

**Nearest Station:** Canary Wharf Tube

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### Old Royal Naval College, SE10 9LW

## Greenwich Ice Rink

❄️ This 18th-century Old Royal Naval College hosts an outdoor ice rink for the fourth year. Famous for its grandeur, the college represents English architecture at its most imposing and formal. With sweeping views across the Thames, it's a remarkable place for a spot of Yuletide skating, though winter warmers are recommended as a gusty wind is known to blow off the river. No matter, you can always warm up at the snug little rink-side café. Greenwich old town has long been regarded as a favourite weekend jaunt and continues to draw both Londoners and tourists. Boasting a cluster of top attractions, most noticeably the National Maritime Museum and its new Planetarium, Greenwich always promises a fun day out and now there's another good excuse to go there. There are 10 one-hour sessions a day and it's best to get your tickets early - sessions at Greenwich sell out fast and this season is shorter than last.

**Phone:** 0870 169 0101

**Date:** 8th December 2007 - 13th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00

**Pricing:** £9.50 (Adults), £7 (Children), £28 (Family - 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children)

**Nearest Station:** Cutty Sark DLR

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### Hampton Court Palace, KT8 9AU

## Hampton Court Palace Ice Rink

❄️ The striking Tudor facade of Hampton Court Palace provides a majestic backdrop to the open-air ice rink. It's a wonderfully traditional way to enjoy the festive season. Located on the west front of Henry VIII's historic palace, the rink affords sweeping views of its breathtaking architecture. Weary skaters can recharge at the Ice Rink Cafe serving up a scrummy selection of hot refreshments - think mulled wine and mince pie. At this time of year the palace itself is adorned with festive decorations and it's worth paying a little extra to take a look inside - a joint palace and skate ticket gets you 25% off the full price. It's enchanting stuff that will definitely leave you with that warm festive glow.

**Phone:** 0870 060 1778

**Date:** 1st December 2007 - 13th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00

**Pricing:** £10 (Adults), £18.50 (Adult - skating and palace entry), £7.50 (U16s), £13.50 (Child - skating and palace entry), £30 (Family - 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children), £57 (Family - skating and palace entry)

**Nearest Station:** Hampton Court Rail

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### Hyde Park, W2 2UH

## Hyde Park Ice Rink

❄️ Throughout December a section of Hyde Park - between Hyde Park Corner and the Serpentine - is transformed into a winter wonderland. Get in the Christmas spirit at the traditional German market, with wooden chalets full of gifts, listen to the carol concerts and have a go on one of the fairground rides. Alternatively, you could try a less traditional bungydome - a mix of trampolining and bungee under the cover of a domed sphere. But the main attraction here is the outdoor ice rink - billed as London's largest - which is open from 10am to 10pm. It's a great way to embrace the cold - and flailing your arms around as you try to stay upright will soon warm you up. A giant Ferris wheel offers a chance to survey this winter wonderland from 50m up, taking in the stunning views over Hyde Park and beyond.

**Phone:** 0871 231 0824

**Date:** 1st December 2007 - 6th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00. Peak Times: Evening sessions from 18:30, weekends, 24th, 26th, 31st Dec & New Year's Day. Off-Peak Times: Weekdays up to the 17:15 session.

**Pricing:** Peak: £12.50 (Adults), £7.50 (Children), £11 (Concs).

**Off-Peak:** £10 (Adults), £7.50 (Children), £9 (Concs), + bkg fee.

**Nearest Station:** Knightsbridge Tube

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### Kew Gardens, TW9 3AB

## Kew Gardens Ice Rink

❄️ There is something particularly fresh and wholesome about skating in Kew Gardens, surrounded by the natural beauty of the great outdoors. On a crisp winter's day Kew's iced court set in front of Temperate House sparkles. Redolent of Victorian times, the acres of woodland and mosaic of winter flowers offer up a wonderfully rustic scene. Even if you're a jittery skater, looking for all the world like Bambi on ice, you'll enjoy the relaxed atmosphere. It's also perfect for smitten couples as well as families - the blur of confident youngsters can usually be seen racing past, backwards. Beside the rink, a cosy cafe (£1 admission) serves up a feast of festive bites and warm drinks. Skating at Kew is good, clean fun and a fantastic opportunity to escape the city and take in one of London's more rural charms. It's worth paying a little extra for a joint ticket which allows you to explore the gardens and greenhouses too. Booking is advised.

Tickets can be bought online at: <https://www.pwrtickets.com/kgir2007/tickets.aspx>

**Phone:** 0870 803 1725

**Date:** 25th November 2007 - 6th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00. Christmas Eve: Ice rink only open (not Kew Gardens). Closed Christmas Day.

**Pricing:** £10 (Adults - off-peak), £11.50 (Adults - peak), £16 (Adults - skating and garden), £7.50 (Children), £7.50 (Child - skating and garden), £30 (Family - 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children), £40 (Family - skating and garden)

**Nearest Station:** Kew Gardens Tube / Rail

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### Natural History Museum, SW7 5BD

## Natural History Museum Ice Rink

❄️ The Natural History Museum once again ices over its gardens and invites London's skaters to slip-slide around their giant ice rink. As with everything this establishment

does, the rink is outstanding and they really have put together a Christmas cracker of a festive attraction. Hosted in the beautiful gardens, the 1,000 square-metre rink sits at the foot of the soaring, Gothic museum building, making this a truly stunning scene. The expanse of gleaming ice is gently overhung by tree branches draped in delicate Christmas lights, while the backdrop of the building itself looms up over the rink showering a warm yellow glow onto the skaters from its large Gothic windows. The additional junior rink is particularly good for tots to teeter about at their leisure without getting mown down by older, bigger - and most likely badder - skaters. Non-skaters can take a seat at the rink-side cosy café bar and enjoy the spectator sport; it's a great place to soak up the buzzing Christmas mood.

Before you leave, make sure you give yourself time to browse the bright stalls at the museum's Christmas Fair (21 November - 2 January). With countless unusual gifts, selling everything from glassware to candles, it's a great place to do a spot of Christmas shopping.

**Phone:** 0844 847 1576

**Date:** 8th November 2007 - 20th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00. 24th & 31st Dec 10:00 - 21:45. Closed 25th Dec. 26th Dec 12:15 - 20:45.

**Pricing:** £10.50 (Adults - before 16:00 on weekdays), £12 (Adults - 17:15 onwards and all weekend), £7.50 (Children), £30 (Family - 2 adults and 2 children or 1 adult and 3 children)

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

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### The O2, The London Piazza, SE10 OPE

## Ice Disco at The O2

❄️ With the British weather being what it is, it's always good to have some undercover entertainment options, especially in the soggy autumn and winter months. Thankfully, you can skate at The O2 even if it is raining cats and dogs outside - though we can't promise you'll remain entirely bone dry if you lose your balance on the ice. Throwing off its 'white elephant' image as 'The Millennium Dome' and reborn as The O2, this vast venue is proving to be a great addition for entertainment on this scale. At 900 square metres, this ice rink is large enough for 250 skaters at a time and includes a purpose-built bar and viewing area. The title 'Ice Disco' suggests a certain tackiness but since when did you look at 'Dancing on Ice' and think 'hmm, how classy'. Exactly. All those sequins and fixed smiles just go to show that ice skating embraces its tacky nature. It's all part of the fun. As well as 69 general skating sessions a week there are also some special themed nights (see below but please note that dates for the themed nights are subject to change).

#### THEMED NIGHTS:

28th November and 5th December - BOY BAND NIGHT

14th December - SKA NIGHT

17th December - GIRL BAND NIGHT

9th December and 16th January - 80s NIGHT

**Phone:** 0871 984 0002

**Date:** 10th November 2007 - 9th March 2008

**Time:** TBC

**Pricing:** £11 (Adults), £7.50 (Children), £9 (Concs), £30 (Family of 4)

**Nearest Station:** North Greenwich Tube

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### Alexandra Park, SL4 1NJ

## Royal Windsor Ice Rink

❄️ Alexandra Gardens become Windsor's winter wonderland when the Victorian gardens, dating back to the early 1900s, get covered in frozen ice for your skating pleasure. Even if you decide against the ice, the Thames Café is an inviting spot to enjoy a warm drink and absorb the seasonal sights. With the famous tower of Windsor Castle overlooking the rink, there's an awe-inspiring view of the royal residence as you skid around. As one of the greatest surviving medieval castles in the world, the reserved grey walls, punctuated by prodigious medieval bastions, continue as far as the eye can see. Don't just come to skate, a tour inside really is worthwhile. Also take time to stroll around the town's endearing cobbled streets, adorned in twinkling Christmas lights, it's a magically festive day out.

**Phone:** 0870 169 6892

**Date:** 8th December 2007 - 6th January 2008

**Time:** 10:00 - 22:00

**Pricing:** £9.50 (Adults), £7 (Children), £28 (Family - 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children)

**Nearest Station:** Windsor Rail

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### Somerset House, WC2R 1LA

## Skate at Somerset House

❄️ The courtyard of Somerset House makes for a spectacular ice rink and a delightful get-you-in-the-spirit warm-up to Christmas. It's the very antithesis of those irritating muzak carol tunes that get pumped out of the shops far too many weeks before Santa Claus is due. Just be sure to watch out for the 7-year-old whizz kids skating backwards past you with their eyes closed. There's even a very nice bar, for added festive cheer, which makes a good place to hang out and watch the fun if you don't feel like braving the ice. Since the rink was launched a few years ago it has become a firm favourite, the perfect outing for white wintry fun and suitable for all ages.

**Phone:** 020 7845 4600

**Date:** 21st November 2007 - 27th January 2008

**Time:** Daily 10:00 - 22:00. Daytime sessions: 10:00 - 17:30.

Evening sessions: 18:45 - 21:45. Late session: 22:00.

**Pricing:** £10 (Adults - daytime), £12.50 (Adults - evening), £15 (Adults - late), £7 (Under 12s)

**Nearest Station:** Embankment Tube

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### HRP Tower Of London, EC3N 4AB

## Tower of London Ice Rink

❄️ Nestled in the rounded hollow of the dry moat, the Tower of London's rink area is set to be a wonderfully festive scene. Running for its third year, the outdoor ice rink at London's most famous castle offers a grand and historical option for skaters. Visitors can carve their route across the ice while taking in one of the most legendary buildings in London. The ideal winter activity for kiddies, couples and mates, cold skaters can thaw out at the Moat Café (free for spectators), warming hands around hot chocolates and munching on mince pies. It's worth paying a little extra and exploring the murky history of the Tower too. For the past 900 years the medieval fortress on the Thames has been the setting for an array of famous and gruesome executions. Beefeaters, the Crown Jewels and a gory array of torture instruments make it

a fantastically colourful attraction.

**Venue:** HRP Tower Of London  
Address: Tower Hill, EC3N 4AB  
**Phone:** 0870 602 1100

**Date:** 24th November 2007 - 13th January 2008

**Time:** 10:00 - 22:00. Peak Times: Evening sessions from 17:15, weekends & New Year's Eve. Off-Peak: Weekdays up to & inc the 16:00 session.

**Pricing:** £12.50 (Adults - peak), £10 (Adults - off-peak), £21 (Adults - skating and tower entry, peak), £19.50, (Adults - skating and tower entry, off-peak), £7.50 (Under 16s), £12.50 (Child - skating and tower entry), £30 (Family - 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults)

**Nearest Station:** Tower Hill Tube

# Festive Fairs

Combine your Christmas shopping with some festive cheer when you visit one of London's Christmas markets. This year there are two German style markets next to outdoor ice rinks and fun fairs at Hyde Park and the Natural History Museum; it's a fun way to get festive. The South Bank is also getting Christmas-y with its Christmas lights and the Bankside Frost Fair. Street theatre, hog roasts and huskies to hug; that'll get you in the Christmas spirit.

**Bankside, SE1 9TG**

## Bankside Frost Fair

❄️ The Frost Fair is back for its fifth year, bringing a variety of street theatre, workshops, shopping and festive cheer to Bankside along the South Bank. With carol singers, street entertainers and a concoction of musicians this event would get even Scrooge into the spirit. It's certainly a popular annual event with 140,000 visitors attending last year and the same number expected again. It's an ideal opportunity for last minute-shopping and sampling some festive food - their enormous hog roasts are irresistible. Warm yourself up with a piping cup of mulled wine served from behind the gleaming ice bar, one of many frozen sculptures adorning Bankside - which you can see being hacked into shape. This area along the Thames is a great place for a winter wander with the Southbank Centre, the Hayward Gallery, its Christmas lights, entertainment at the Royal Festival Hall and films at the BFI. Hug a husky, hear some festive music, have a hog roast and head home with armfuls of presents and a warm glow.

**Phone:** 020 7357 9168

**Date:** Friday 14th - Sunday 16th December 2007

**Time:** Fri 11:00-21:00, Sat 10:00-21:00, Sun 10:00-18:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

**Pimlico Road, Elizabeth Street and Motcomb Street**

## Belgravia Christmas Party

❄️ Carol singers, jugglers, festive stilt walkers, competitions and Father Christmas turn the quiet streets of Belgravia into a riot of colour and Christmas fun this December. For one day only, Pimlico Road, Elizabeth Street and Motcomb Street gear up for one big street party. If the five-minute walk between streets gets too much you can get a free rickshaw from one street to the next. Local shops, including Appley Hoare Antiques, David Linley and Joanna Wood will be doing their bit too. Appley Hoare Antiques, for example, adds a French flavour with accordion players and regional French wines. Feast on roasted chestnuts and Christmas pretzels at Daylesford Organics where you can also see a demonstration of wreath-making in their 'Garden Room'. Or drop in on modern Italian restaurant, Vivezza, for a glass of warm vin brule - an Italian speciality from Piedmont - along with small, homemade savoury biscuits.

**Date:** Sunday 9th December 2007

**Time:** 11:00-16:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

**St Marylebone Parish Church Grounds, Marylebone High Street, NW1 5LT**

## Cabbages and Frocks Market

❄️ Once a week this welcome addition comes to Marylebone, making a weekend stroll up the pretty high street an even more attractive proposition. On Saturdays the Cabbages and Frocks Market takes over the grounds of Marylebone Parish Church to the north of Marylebone High Street. The brainchild of the organisers of the London Fashion Designer Sales, there's a good mix of stalls selling everything from oils and balsamic vinegars to hand-made jewellery. Hidden among the vintage clothes you can, if you're lucky, find some genuine designer gear at knock-down prices. Much of the food on sale is organic with macaroons from Masayuki Hara (formerly at the Caviar House) and Moroccan Bedouin food from Abdul (ex-Momo's). Enjoy cappuccinos and cup cakes or take it all in with a freshly squeezed fruit cocktail.

**Phone:** 020 7794 1636

**Timing:** Sat 11:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** Baker Street Tube

**Camden Passage, N1 8EE**

## Camden Passage

❄️ Hidden down a cobble-stoned Angel backstreet a whimsical collection of odds and ends have been gathered together on a selection of market stalls (not to be confused with and nowhere near to Camden Market). Intermingled among elegant antique shops and restaurants, it is very easy to spend a day rummaging through the muddle of goodies. The antique shops themselves are the real hidden gems of Camden Passage. As well as the more traditional stores - a much admired doll and toy dealer, a specialist mantel clocks vendor and 'Georgian Village', full of ornate glass and precious china among them - are indulgent chocolates at Paul A Young and a brand new flagship FrostFrench store just opened. Most of the specialist traders really know their stuff so just chatting to them can be very informative as well as a lot of fun. Strive to find the bargains;

prices can be high so haggling is essential. Many of the smaller shops and stalls are only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, but the larger antique furniture shops may open on other days if visitors ring the bell. Every Sunday Camden Passage hosts a popular farmers' market selling a range of locally grown organic foods.

**Phone:** 020 7359 0190

**Timing:** Wednesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays | Farmers' Market: Sundays, Wed 7:00-14:00, Thu 7:00-16:00 & Sat 8:00-16:00.

**Nearest Station:** Angel Tube

Chelsea Physic Garden, SW3 4HS

## Chelsea Physic Garden Christmas Fair

❄️ Chelsea's historical botanical gardens open their gates for a charming walk through nature and a chance to pick up some Christmas gifts. Laid out in the 17th century, the gardens were initially intended as a place to grow medicinal plants for the Royal Hospital just up the road, taking advantage of its mild micro-climate, which allows non-native species to flourish. You're welcome to wander on your own through the charming collection of flowers and plants from across the globe. But opt for a guided tour and you can tap into a rich vein of history and some green fingered anecdotes. The 3.5-acre site on the banks of the Thames is a wonderful spot for this Christmas fair which sees a shopping marquee full of stalls selling jewellery, cashmere, gloves, bags, tasty treats and loads more. Don't worry about keeping the kids entertained either, there are plenty of activities for them too, and everyone can join in with the carol singing.

**Phone:** 020 7352 5646

**Date:** Sunday 2nd December 2007

**Time:** 11:00-16:00

**Pricing:** £7 (Adults), £4 (5-15 Years, Students & Unemployed)

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

Olivier Foyers, National Theatre, SE1 9PX

## Dazzle London

❄️ Dazzle brings together a clutch of talented international jewellery designers and presents their one-off pieces at the National Theatre. With over 80 designers taking part, there are certainly plenty of beautiful, glinting decorative pieces to catch your eye. There's even something for the boys: a special men's section featuring cufflinks and pins as well as a dedicated 'Dazzle Men' shopping evening on 6th December (4-8pm) when the potential pit-falls of gift buying can be avoided thanks to expert advice from personal shoppers, gift-wrapping and complimentary drinks. There's also a special 'Dazzle in Stitches' feature including embroidery and textile work, showing the work of five internationally respected contemporary embroiderers who work in figurative and abstract pictures. Alongside established designers such as Jane Adam, Elizabeth Bone and Kate Hodgson, are talented youngsters fresh from their college degree shows; Anna Wales, Jan Rooney and Momoko Kumai among them. With a line-up like that, they're all set to sparkle.

**Time:** Mon to Fri 10:00-22:00 | Sat 10:00-23:00 | Bank Holidays 16:00-22:00 | Christmas Day & Boxing Day Closed

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail

Ham House, TW10 7RS

## Ham House Christmas Fair

❄️ To celebrate Christmas, Ham House is hosting a fantastic Christmas fair in a heated marquee in the grounds. It's a great way to find those stocking fillers and one-off gifts with the individual touch (many are made by local traders) and, with free admission, browsing won't cost you a penny. Over the weekend of Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd December you'll also be able to see selected rooms decorated in the style of an early 19th-century Christmas. It's all part of their Austen-tacious Christmas (£3, Adults; £2, Children) when the historic house shows a selection of costumes recently made for 'Miss Austen Regrets' a lavish BBC production coming to the small screen soon, focusing on the life and career of Jane Austen. During that weekend you can see demonstrations of Regency dance in the Great Hall by Ellis Rogers, an expert on the subject, and the Quadrille Club, a dance club he and his wife host once a month at Cecil Sharp House, London.

**Phone:** 020 8940 1950

**Date:** Sat 1st, Sun 2nd, Sun 9th, Sat 15th & Sun 16th Dec 2007

**Time:** 11:00-16:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Richmond Tube / Rail

Hyde Park, W2 2UH

## Hyde Park Winter Wonderland

❄️ Throughout December and into early January a section of Hyde Park - between Hyde Park Corner and the Serpentine - is transformed into a Winter Wonderland. Get in the Christmas spirit at the traditional German market, with wooden chalets full of gifts, food and drink. Carol concerts and fairground rides are among the entertainment or you could try the less traditional bungydome - a mix of trampolining and bungee under the cover of a domed sphere. There's also the outdoor ice rink - billed as London's largest - open from 10am to 10pm. It's a great way to embrace the cold - and flailing your arms around as you try to stay upright will soon warm you up. Doing a turn on the giant wheel, at 50 metres high, will give you great views over this winter wonderland, taking in the stunning scene over Hyde Park.

**Phone:** 0871 231 0824

**Date:** Saturday 1st December 2007 - Sunday 6th January 2008. Closed Christmas Day

**Time:** 10:00-22:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Knightsbridge Tube

Kenwood House, NW3 7JR

## Kenwood House Christmas Fair

❄️ Kenwood House, Robert Adam's neoclassical villa to the north of Hampstead Heath, houses an impressive collection of paintings by artists like Rembrandt, Vermeer and Reynolds. Now, just for Christmas, they're hosting a Christmas Fair in the Orangery so you can mix your culture with some shopping and make a day of it. You'll find a wide selection of gift ideas at the fair which stays open until 5pm on Sundays before Christmas in December with early mornings from 10am on Sunday 16th and 23rd December. A bracing hike across the heath to get to the fair is recommended - not only will you get that rosy-cheeked glow but you'll be rewarded with wonderful views across north London.

**Phone:** 020 8348 1286

**Date:** Saturday 10th November 2007 - Sunday 27th January 2008

**Time:** 11:00-16:00 | Extended to 17:00 on Sundays in Dec up to Christmas | Early morning shopping from 10:00 on Sun 16th & 23rd Dec

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Hampstead Tube

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Menier Chocolate Factory, Menier Gallery, SE1 1RU

## Menier Chocolate Factory Craft & Design Fair

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❄️ The third annual Craft and Design Fair at the Menier Gallery showcases the work of over 35 contemporary makers. This year, Megan Price sells her kitsch print 'n' stitch canvasses next to original items including jewellery, ceramics, prints, leatherware and homeware. With the fair spread across two floors of the Menier Gallery you're sure to find some unique and imaginative Christmas presents. And, seeing as it's all in aid of Paintings in Hospitals - whose permanent home is here at the Menier Gallery - you'll feel kind and clever at the same time for effectively giving twice.

**Phone:** 020 7407 3222

**Date:** Friday 7th & Saturday 8th December 2007

**Time:** 11:00-18:30

**Pricing:** £1 (Donation to Paintings in Hospitals)

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

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Natural History Museum, SW7 5BD

## Natural History Museum Christmas Fair

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❄️ The Natural History Museum gets festive at this time of year with its annual German-style Christmas fair and ice rink. Wooden chalet huts house a cluster of 38 stalls near the outdoor ice rink, offering a choice of unusual gifts and food, selling everything from glassware to toys, ceramics to candles. It's a great place to do a spot of Christmas shopping - and sample some seriously good chocolate. With the market on site, you can combine a visit to the museum with some Christmas shopping. While you're here leave time to stop off at the rink-side cafe, where you can sip on something hot while watching the skaters slip up. It's a great way to enjoy the seasonal cheer while soaking up the atmosphere in the shadow of this great museum.

**Phone:** 0844 847 1576

**Date:** Tuesday 20th November 2007 - Sunday 6th January 2008. Closed Mondays & 25th December (Christmas Day).

**Time:** 10:00-22:00 | 24th & 31st Dec 10:00-21:45 | 26th Dec 12:15-20:45

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

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Between Middlesex and Goulston Streets, E1 7HT

## Petticoat Lane Market

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❄️ Petticoat Lane is London's world-famous Sunday market and sells mainly clothes for men, women and children, from street-cred clubwear to over-orders of designer goods and last year's must-haves. One of its specialities is leatherwear at

the Aldgate East end and there's bric-a-brac, household goods, in fact everything you could possibly think of plus some other bits and bobs too. The market is held in and around Middlesex Street on Sundays from 9am to 2pm, with a smaller market open on Wentworth Street from Monday to Friday. Confusingly, the actual street 'Petticoat Lane' doesn't exist any more - we have the Victorians' prudishness to thank for that; wishing to avoid any reference to undergarments they changed the name to Middlesex Street in 1846. More than 1,000 stalls line the streets on a Sunday, it's a great scene worth the trip even if you're not shopping. With Spitalfields Market and Brick Lane within walking distance, you can easily cover two markets in one day - just be sure to start early as Spitalfields, in particular, gets very busy on a Sunday. A visit to Petticoat Lane, however, is best for bargains, haggling and seeing a wonderful cross-section of London life.

**Timing:** Every Sunday 9:00-14:00. Smaller market open from Mon to Fri on Wentworth Street.

**Nearest Station:** Liverpool Street Tube / Rail

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Portobello Road, W11 1LU

## Portobello Road Market

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❄️ The famous Portobello Road antiques and flea market in Notting Hill takes place every Saturday although there are also stalls from Monday to Friday. Running from Chepstow Villas to just under the Westway, it is a colourful, dynamic stretch of London that oozes trendiness and fun. On Saturday, it's huge, with over 2,000 stalls, selling everything from books to bric-a-brac, lace to Limoges, fresh fruit to fashion. Thousands of people mill around browsing second-hand clothing stalls or choosing outlandish material. For those who have the patience to search, there are some fantastic bargains. This really is the place to shop and eat and then shop some more while soaking up the bo-ho atmosphere. It is best to go in the morning, by the afternoon you will find yourself getting a little flustered winding your way through the crowds.

**Phone:** 020 7229 8354

**Timing:** Mon to Wed & Fri 8:00 - 18:30, Thu half day till 13:00, Every Saturday 8:00 - 18:30

**Nearest Station:** Ladbroke Grove Tube

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109 Commercial Street, E1 6BG

## Spitalfields Market

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❄️ Nestled in the heart of the City, in the shadow of Christ Church, Old Spitalfields Market offers the perfect antidote to out-of-town shopping malls. You'll find the delightful, old covered market off Brushfield Street if you're coming from Liverpool Street station. The stalls under the covered part of the market are the place to look for something original, of excellent quality and value for money. Sundays are by far the busiest, with over 200 stalls operating, including a specialist organic market. On weekdays between 11:00 and 16:00 the market's varied stalls are quieter, except at lunchtime, when the choice of eating places attracts the young City crowd. On Fridays, there's a fun fashion market where young designers showcase their work. There's so much to do and see here - and plenty of interesting one-off shops with character surrounding the covered market too. Spitalfields has evolved elegantly, combining the new with the old so you'll get new brands like Canteen and Benefit behind the large, glass-fronted stores happily sitting next to sole traders selling quirky clothes from their market stalls.

**Days & Stalls:**

Mondays to Fridays & Sundays: Market Stalls  
 Wednesdays: Fine Food Market, Records & Books (1st & 3rd of the month)  
 Thursdays: Antiques Market  
 Fridays: Fashion & Art  
 Sundays: Busiest da - Fine Food, Fashion & Art

**Timing:** Market Stalls: Mon to Fri 10:00-16:00, Sun 9:00-17:00. Restaurants: Mon to Fri 11:00-23:00, Sun 9:00-17:00. Shops: Times vary but generally Mon to Sun 11:00-19:00

**Nearest Station:** Shoreditch Tube or Liverpool Street Tube / Rail

**Sutton House, 2-4 Homerton High Street, E9 6JQ**

## Sutton House Christmas Craft Fair

❄️ Sutton House is a fantastic example of a medieval Tudor home. Built in 1535 it's one of the oldest brick buildings in Hackney. The historic, oak-panelled rooms are a wonderful place to host a craft fair and get in the Christmas mood. Browse the stalls for gifts and you'll be treated to some festive music. Bring the kids too and they'll be kept busy with activities specially arranged for children. If you've made the journey to Hackney, leave time for some discount shopping at the Burberry Factory Outlet store, not far from Hackney Central station at 29-53 Chatam Place, E9 6LP, where you can save up to a third on Burberry classics. Open: Mon to Sat 11:00-18:00; Sun 10:00-17:00. Phone: 020 8328 4287.

**Phone:** 020 8986 2264

**Date:** Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd December 2007

**Time:** 12:00-17:00

**Pricing:** £2

**Nearest Station:** Hackney Central Silverlink Station

**Walton Street, SW3 2JD**

## Walton Street Christmas Market

❄️ For one day only, the pretty shops and boutiques along Walton Street share space with a host of stalls creating a temporary Christmas market. Arguably one of the prettiest shopping streets in London, Walton Street is a delight at any time of year. But, with the shops chipping in, they're putting on a great show with stilt walkers, real reindeers, carol singers, face painting, puppeteers and Father Christmas. In addition to the regular shops like Nina Campbell, Farmacia Santa Maria Novella and Dragons of Walton Street are market stalls where you'll find Flour Power City organic bread, Patchwork Pate Farmstead Cheese, The Cup Cake Company, Demarquette Chocolate and many more. You can even indulge in oysters and champagne - that's a step up from mince pies and mulled wine. Well, this is Knightsbridge dharling.

**Date:** Sunday 2nd December 2007

**Time:** 12:00-18:00. Ribbon cutting by Princess Marie Chantal of Greece 12:15

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** South Kensington Tube

# Shows & Pantos

Christmas panto is often children's first experience of the wonderful world of theatre; it's colourful and camp, there's usually a princess for the girls and a baddie for the boys and, whatever the occasion, it's exciting going out after dark when you're knee-high, especially with all the twinkling fairy lights around town. It's a grand old British tradition to round up the whole rabble and traipse off to a show at Christmas time - from curtain-up to standing ovation, we love all the boo-ing banter, screams of 'He's behind you!' and slapstick comedy of the pantomime Dame and hopeless horse. But it's not all tomfoolery and frolicking - there are some truly magical and awe-inspiring shows on London's theatre scene this Christmas that will captivate audiences of all ages. For those among us who really can't cope with the "oohs" and "aaahs" of panto pandemonium, the winter seasons at the Royal Opera House and Coliseum promise to capture a beautiful, cultured Christmas.

**Young Vic, 66 The Cut, SE1 8LZ**

## A Christmas Carol / Ikrismas Kherol

❄️ A thirty-strong company of South African actors perform the Young Vic's Christmas show this year, with the music and dance of the townships mixing with the plot of Dickens' beloved Christmas ghost stories. In 'Ikrismas Kherol', Victorian England is replaced with the ever-changing economic landscape of the new South Africa, and Scrooge becomes a woman whose success is called into question on Christmas Eve by a visit from the ancestral spirits. The Young Vic is a great venue for song-and-dance, with the audience's closeness to the cast creating a thoroughly infectious atmosphere.

Suitable for ages 12 and up.

**Phone:** 020 7928 6363

**Date:** Tuesday 20th November 2007 - Saturday 19th January 2008

**Time:** Mon to Sat 19:30, Matinees Sat 14:30

**Pricing:** £18.50-£24.50

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube/Rail

**Lyric Theatre, King Street, Hammersmith, W6 0QL**

## Beauty and the Beast

❄️ Jean Cocteau's cinematic masterpiece 'La Belle et la Bete' is the inspiration for this tale of a beautiful young woman determined to rescue her father from the beast who imprisons him. Cocteau's interpretation of the children's story adds surreal overtones to this tale of love, loyalty and family ties. Taking this as their starting point, Told by an Idiot's production

at the Lyric stars a feisty Beauty and features live music and the kind of physical theatre they've used in previous productions at the Lyric: 'The Firework-Maker's Daughter', 'Aladdin', and most recently 'Casanova'. Pint-sized Beauty is played by Lisa Hammond who may be familiar from television dramas and comedy including Peter Kay's Channel 4 'Max and Paddy's Road to Nowhere' as well as BBC2 drama 'North Face'. Co-stars include Hayley Carmichael, co-artistic director of Told by an Idiot and Time Out Best Actress Award-winner, and Javier Marzan. Also on the bill are Nick Haverson and Darmesh Patel who have trampled upon these boards before - as well as those of the ENO and the National Theatre - with the 'Improbable' theatre company.

Not recommended for under 7s.

**Phone:** 08700 500511

**Date:** Thursday 29th November 2007 - Saturday 5th January 2008

**Time:** 10:00, 13:30, 18:00, 19:00 | Times vary - check with theatre.

**Pricing:** £13, £17, £23 & £27 (Adults), £10 (Children & Concs), £44 (four tickets inc at least one child)

**Nearest Station:** Hammersmith Tube

**Old Vic, The Cut, SE1 8NB**

## Cinderella

❄️ Two years after Ian McKellen's magnificent Dame, another of the Stately Homos of England (joke copyright Quentin Crisp) turns his hand to the Old Vic's annual pantomime. Novelist, actor, comedian and professional nice chap Stephen Fry has written a new version of 'Cinderella' that is rich in romance, cross-dressing and cake. Fry's previous forays into theatre have met with limited success, but his love of language, bad taste and genial silliness are well suited to pantomime. The Old Vic can never quite match the raucous atmosphere of more traditional panto venues like the Hackney Empire, but makes great entertainment for people who like their audience participation laced with an iota of intelligence.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Tuesday 4th December 2007 - Sunday 20th January 2008

**Time:** Wed to Sat 14:30 & 19:30, Tue 19:30, Sun 13:00 & 17:30 | No matinees Dec 5th, 6th, 7th & Jan 11th, 18th | No shows Dec 24th, 25th, 31st & Jan 1st

**Pricing:** £20-£40

**Nearest Station:** Lambeth North Tube

**The Little Angel Theatre, 14 Dagmar Passage, Cross Street N1 2DN**

## 'Cinderella' and 'Little Cinders'

❄️ There are two puppetry productions of Cinderella at the Little Angel this winter; one for children aged five and over and a second, 'Little Cinders', for younger toddlers aged two to five - a pared-down version running for just 30 minutes. Puppets may sound like an old-fashioned idea but in the hands of director Steve Tiplady - who also runs the Little Angel - puppets and marionettes bring new magic to the well-known story by the Grimm Brothers. With Peter O'Rourke's intricate set and puppet designs and music by Hannah Marshall, the Fairy Godmother, pumpkin carriage, missing glass slipper and Prince Charming are all magically recreated.

Babies are only admitted at baby friendly shows: Dec 16th & Jan 13th 10:30.

**Phone:** 020 7226 1787

**Date:** Saturday 10th November 2007 - Sunday 27th January 2008

**Time:** Cinderella: Wed to Sun | Little Cinders: Thu & Sun (from Dec 2nd 2007) | Times vary - check with theatre.

**Pricing:** £8-£10 (Adults), £6-£8 (Children & Concs), Free (Under 2s at baby friendly shows)

**Nearest Station:** Angel Tube

**Barbican Theatre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS**

## Jack and the Beanstalk

❄️ When the Barbican commissioned 'Shopping and F\*\*\*ing' author Mark Ravenhill to write their first ever panto last year it was quite a departure for the theatre. The production, however, was met with enthusiasm from even the most high brow reviewers. Audiences clearly agreed, as they're repeating the exercise again this year. This time, the classic 'Jack and the Beanstalk' takes to the stage, penned by Jonathan Harvey who was responsible for 'Closer to Heaven', 'Beautiful Thing', 'Boom Bang-A-Bang' and 'Gimme Gimme Gimme'. So we can expect humour above and beyond the hilarious 'He's Behind You!' gags, and there'll be some new characters to spice up the old tale of the boy who exchanges his family's cow for a magic bean. Playing Princess Melody is ex Hear Say member Suzanne Shaw while comic Mel Giedroyc (from 'Mel and Sue' fame) plays 'Fairy Liquid'. Yes it's silly and slapstick but that's what makes it great fun, family entertainment.

**Phone:** 08451 207550

**Date:** Saturday 1st December 2007 - Saturday 12th January 2008

**Time:** Various | No performances Dec 2nd, 9th, 10th, 17th, 24th-26th & Jan 1st or 7th

**Pricing:** £8-£35 (kids go half price)

**Nearest Station:** Barbican Tube

**Royal Opera House, Bow Street, Covent Garden, WC2E 9DD**

## La Cenerentola

❄️ If the thought of Danny La Rue dressed up in drag as the Fairy Godmother is enough to send you over the edge this Christmas, The Royal Opera's 'La Cenerentola' may be just the thing. An operatic take on the famous fairytale 'Cinderella', this production is a classic Christmas night out without any of the booing, aaaaahs or "He's behind you!" lines. In fact, Rossini even did away with all the magic touches found in the traditional story so there's not a wand or a pumpkin in sight on the esteemed Royal Opera House stage. Our Cinders, Angelina, sung by Magdalena Kozena in her Royal Opera debut, arrives at the ball in a limo and the whole production is styled with 1950s glamour. The soft elegance, picture-perfect backdrops and uplifting music sweep you majestically into this enduring opera.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Monday 17th December 2007 - Wednesday 9th January 2008

**Time:** Dec 17th & 20th, Jan 2nd, 7th, 9th 19:30 | Dec 22nd, 26th, 29th 19:00 | Dec 31st 18:30 | Jan 4th 12:30

**Pricing:** £6-£165

**Nearest Station:** Covent Garden Tube

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Sadler's Wells Theatre, Rosebery Avenue, EC1R 4TN

## Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!

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❄️ This is pure imagination let loose; 'Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker!' at Sadler's Wells is a kaleidoscopic, fantastical, glittering gem of a show with a few more Christmas sparkles on top. Over the top, certainly. Magical, oh yes. And, without a doubt, one of the most theatrical ballets of modern times. It's the humorous eccentricity of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' (there is a Sweetieland, after all) mixed with the razzmatazz of 'Moulin Rouge', but with a thread of such beauty running through it that it fuses joyfully with Tchaikovsky's wonderful score. In the first break with tradition the sumptuous festive party of the opening scene becomes a Gothic-style Christmas at an orphanage, making the transition to the swirling snowscape and storybook kingdom even more dramatic. It's like walking through a vivid dream with the eyes of childhood innocence; colours leap from the stage and the action is a whirlwind of events, all tinged with Matthew Bourne's signature style that is both hip and funny.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Thursday 13th December 2007 - Sunday 20th January 2008

**Time:** Tue to Sun 19:30 (except Christmas Day), Sat & Sun 14:30 | Dec 20th, 27th & Jan 3rd 14:30

**Pricing:** £10-£49

**Nearest Station:** Angel Tube

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New Wimbledon Theatre, The Broadway, SW19 1QG

## Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

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❄️ Actor Ross Kemp - aka Grant from 'EastEnders' - stars in the "Hi-Ho! Hi-Ho!" tale of Snow White and her seven grumpy, happy, sleepy and bashful little people. With Bobby Davro as Muddles the Court Jester, 'Snow White' - with Aimie Atkinson in the title role - is set to be a Christmas special. Kids love this classic fairy tale of the Wicked Queen and the poisoned apple, and in this hilarious pantomime production there's plenty to keep the adults entertained too - not least seeing Kemp as the villainous henchman. Spectacular sets, sparkling costumes, comedy, bags of audience participation and entertaining song and dance routines make this a fun family outing. Everyone can sing along to well-known songs from the Disney film including 'Heigh-Ho', 'Some Day My Prince Will Come' and 'Whistle While You Work', the theme tune for those industrious dwarfs. The moral of the story may be a little dated as the prince comes to save the day, but it's a safe bet that there's a 'happily ever after' ending.

**Phone:** 08700 606646

**Date:** Friday 7th December 2007 - Sunday 20th January 2008

**Time:** 14:00 & 19:00 most days | Check with theatre.

**Pricing:** £12-£24 (plus booking fee)

**Nearest Station:** Wimbledon Tube / Rail

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Arts Theatre, 6-7 Great Newport Street, WC2H 7JB

## The Gruffalo's Child

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❄️ In London for another stint on the stage, the world's most friendly monster, the Gruffalo, is back, scaring and entertaining children in equal measure. His warning to his child not to go into the deep, dark wood where the mouse lives, falls on deaf ears and so the adventure begins. Threatening predators we've met before in the original

Gruffalo story - the snake, owl, fox and mouse - are all here, convincingly portrayed by just three actors. Songs that you'll want to sing-a-long to, even if you are over the target audience age, and a stage that looks like something out of a storybook make this a wonderful production. Many of the memorable lines become catchphrases and are repeated throughout the show appealing to the 'again, again' approach favoured by children. By the end of the show they can join in with their favourite bits. The play really does work hard to pitch the tone of the show at young children and employs special motifs to appeal to them. It's all incredibly imaginative and a lovely addition to the festive calendar for young kiddies.

Recommended for children aged 4+

**Phone:** 08700 601742

**Date:** Wednesday 28th November 2007 - Sunday 6th January 2008

**Time:** Tue & Fri 11:00, Wed & Thu 11:00 & 13:30, Sat & Sun 13:30 & 15:30

**Pricing:** £14.50 (Adults), £9.50 (Children)

**Nearest Station:** Leicester Square Tube

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The Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane, WC2N 4ES

## The Nutcracker

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❄️ Like unwrapping a Christmas present or wandering through a dream, 'The Nutcracker' has all the wide-eyed suspense of something unexpected about to happen. Senses are heightened by cartoonist Gerald Scarfe's storybook sets and, as the dancers start to twist and turn through the pages of this pop-up production, fact and fiction melt together. The much-loved tale of little Clara's adventures as she witnesses the growing Christmas tree, travels to the Land of Snow and comes to face-to-face with the Sugar Plum Fairy is given a fresh perspective by some theatrical gems. Snowflakes do sprightly leaps out of a giant fridge, the mice burst onto stage with machine guns and gas masks to do battle and the 'Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy' lives up to Tchaikovsky's twinkling score. Children and the young at heart will just love the magic and sparkle of this Christmas production.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Wednesday 19th December 2007 - Sunday 6th January 2008

**Time:** 14:30 & 19:30 | Dec 23rd, Dec 30th & Jan 6th 15:00

**Pricing:** £8-£60

**Nearest Station:** Leicester Square Tube

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The Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane, WC2N 4ES

## The Snow Queen

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❄️ Images of C.S Lewis's White Witch spring to mind at the mention of 'The Snow Queen' and these two fantastical characters are not a million miles apart. In fact, they could be sisters and probably inhabit the exact same frosty land where it is forever winter and they can work their evil spells over innocent children. All sound a bit nightmarish before Christmas? Never fear, in Hans Christian Andersen's quintessential fairytale, good will prevail in the end. The story goes that young Kay's heart turns bad when he catches a sliver of the Snow Queen's mirror in his eye. He is captivated by her beauty and is off to her palace in the far frozen north before you can say "rescue mission". Luckily Kay's friend Gerda is waiting in the wings with a reindeer (it is Christmas after all) to break the spell. Add 64 dancers, the English National Ballet's full orchestra, and a sprinkling of fairy dust and you've got a spectacular Christmas production at the Coliseum.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370  
**Date:** Tuesday 11th December 2007 - Sunday 16th December 2007  
**Time:** Dec 11th - 15th 19:30 | Matinees Dec 13th, 15th & 16th  
**Pricing:** £8-£60  
**Nearest Station:** Leicester Square Tube

Peacock Theatre, Portugal Street, WC2A 2HT

## The Snowman

❄️ Who can forget Aled Jones's dulcet tones singing 'Walking in the Air' in the animation of Raymond Briggs's beautifully-illustrated book 'The Snowman'. Aled has since moved on from his choirboy days (finding fame switching on Christmas lights, appearing in panto and presenting 'Songs of Praise') but the spirit of 'The Snowman' lives on in this winter wonderland of a stage show. This is the theatrical equivalent of going to see Father Christmas in his grotto except infinitely more spectacular - a young boy's snowman comes to life and the two of them fly across the sky with a full moon behind them, whizz around the stage on a sidecar motorcycle and meet a snow princess and the icy Jack Frost on their night-time adventure. When Father Christmas does appear on the scene it's in a shimmering woodland, surrounded by magical reindeer, dancing penguins and a host of snowy friends. As the first notes of 'Walking in the Air' fill the theatre, the heart-melting factor will not disappoint as awe-struck children (and adults) are mesmerised by the dazzling light show of snow.

Suitable for children aged 2+

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370  
**Date:** Wednesday 5th December 2007 - Sunday 6th January 2008  
**Time:** Schedule varies with shows at 11:00, 14:30 & 19:00 | No shows on Dec 11th, 13th, 18th, 19th, 25th & Jan 1st  
**Pricing:** £12-£30 | Family Ticket £90 (four tickets inc at least one child)  
**Nearest Station:** Holborn Tube

National Theatre: Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, SE1 9PX

## War Horse

❄️ Following the blistering entertainment of 'Coram Boy' and 'His Dark Materials', the National Theatre embarks on another adaptation of an epic children's book, Michael Morpurgo's World War I epic 'War Horse'. When his beloved horse Joey is shipped off to the front lines, Albert, still too young to enlist, embarks on a mission to bring him home. The book - told from the horse's point of view - is a genuine classic, packed with terrifying cavalry charges, gruff humour, and moments of rich emotion that are more than capable of reducing entire first-year classes to tears. Marianne Elliott and Tom Morris' production is hugely ambitious, using life-size puppets for the horses. Given the National's recent record with large-scale children's theatre, this should be very good indeed. An interesting alternative for Christmas in the West End.

Suitable for children aged 12+

**Phone:** 020 7452 3000  
**Date:** Monday 8th October 2007 - Saturday 12th January 2008  
**Time:** 19:30, Matinees 14:30 | Times vary - check with theatre.  
**Pricing:** £10-£40  
**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail

# Tinsel & Trimmings

Half the fun of Christmas is dressing up...not just yourself but your home. Whether it's cool chic, snug sparkle or a winter wonderland you're after, London has got all the inspiration and paraphernalia to create a festive atmosphere. From buying your tree to putting the finishing touches to the dining table, we've put together a complete guide to where to go for traditional trimmings, imaginative ideas, the best bargains, most elegant decorations and even hands-on hints for getting creative with the kids. Filled to overflowing with baubles, tinsel, fairy lights, candles and wreaths, our favourite festive shops, tree farms and workshops are dotted around town so, wherever your winter wandering takes you, prepare to be inspired and pick up seasonal stuff to adorn every nook and cranny, branch and fireplace, door and window with yuletide magic.

N1 Shopping Centre, Islington, N1 0PS

## Butlers

❄️ With all those last-minute jobs (Auntie Mabel's present, stocking fillers for the kids, oh, and the turkey) it's easy to forget about making your dining table to look Christmas-y. But, fear not, Butlers in Islington has everything you need, from the ideas to the products, to give a festive wow factor to Christmas lunch. As well as wholly unnecessary but fabulously frivolous table decorations, they've got a first-class selection of tablecloths, placemats, napkins and even glassware, crockery and cutlery. The shop, housed in the N1 Shopping Centre, has laid and decorated tables dotted around with all the products on-hand next to the display, meaning you can be inspired and then easily find what you're looking for without hunting through shelf after shelf. Whether you are working to a colour-scheme, have a particular theme in mind or just want to do something different, they can help you create a fully coordinated (or not) table. Once here, you don't have to stop at the dining room - there are candle-inspired centrepieces, lovely lanterns and stones and gems to scatter that will look beautiful all over the home.

**Phone:** 020 3227 0025  
**Timing:** Mon to Sat 10:00-20:00, Sun 11:00-17:00  
**Nearest Station:** Angel Tube

28 Blythe Road, W14 0HA

## Candle Makers Supplies

❄️ There's nothing quite like a sea of flickering flames, especially when the Christmas tree's up and glittering, to create a cosy Christmas-y atmosphere. And for those of us who can juggle festive multi-tasking, candle-making can just be slotted in between sloshing the brandy in the Christmas

pud and leaving a tippie for Father Christmas... Situated just behind Olympia, this shop, dripping with wax and other candle-creating paraphernalia, supplies candles to Kensington Palace; fire-starters by royal appointment no less. Candle Makers Supplies has been in business since 1969, so if you feel like making your own flammable wax works this is the place to get all the gear. From waxes and wicks to dyes and dipping cans, you'll be presented with an astonishing array of equipment to ignite ideas about how to light up your living room. You can mould your candles into flowers, fruit and animals, go for more classic shapes or try floating candles. There are even specially-designed candle kits for beginners and a soft wax one in bright colours for children. At Christmas time, Santa and snowmen candle equipment makes an appearance for a fun and festive way to give a glow to your home.

**Phone:** 020 7602 4031

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 10:30-18:00, Sat 10:30-17:00. Closed for lunch daily 13:00-14:00

**Nearest Station:** Kensington (Olympia) Tube

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**2 Barker Drive, St Pancras Way, NW1 0JW**

## Camden Garden Centre

❄️ If you really want to go to tacky town on transforming your garden into a grotto then you'll need to get on the net, where you can order all sorts of multi-coloured, 3D, light-up, flashing and shimmering outdoor decorations. While Camden Garden Centre does offer waving Santa and reindeer silhouettes, the focus is not on creating an epileptic illumination to annoy the neighbours but on festooning your home with the feel of a glowing winter wonderland. There are lights galore to choose from: berries, snowmen, icicles, strings of fairy lights, sets of 500, everything you need for a festive twinkle. The experience does not stop here - the garden centre's Christmas Spectacular (new for this year) is a whole floor of seasonal stuff including crackers in a range of children's themes, tinsel and garlands in shimmering colours and decorations and baubles to deck your tree. There's also a range of hats, Santa sacks, stocking fillers, Advent calendars and touches to jazz up your Christmas table. From the end of November every year it's full of the finest Christmas trees too. The standard is exceptional - hard-wearing needles, rich greens and big bushy branches are typical of their trees. If you want to decorate your home from top to toe this is a brilliant place to stock up. Demand for trees is high so get in early.

**Phone:** 020 7387 7080

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 9:00-17:00, Sun 10:00-16:00. Christmas Eve half-day.

**Nearest Station:** Camden Town Tube

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**St John's Church, Kilburn Lane, W10 4AA**

## The Christmas Forest

❄️ We all know that pine needles are a pain (especially when you tread on them) but for a truly traditional Christmas it's got to be the real thing. The peeps at The Christmas Forest do a fine job of supplying freshly cut, lush trees to London (a choice of six types of firs and spruces no less) and some with needles that stay miraculously on the branches! We love these guys; by creating this urban forest in Kensal Green (and on six other farm-style sites around the capital) we can enjoy our tree-browsing experience AND know that they're doing a bit of good at the same time; for every tree that is sold, a new tree will be planted in Burkina Faso through 'Tree Aid', meeting

basic needs like food and fuel and providing extra income. The Christmas Forest also saves on 'tree miles', sourcing home-grown firs from special farms and sustainable plantations in the UK rather than flying them all the way from Scandinavia. Bringing the magic of visiting a country farm to the city, once you've chosen the right tree, you can add a few more homely festive touches by shopping for wreaths, lights, mistletoe, holly and even logs for the fire.

There are other Christmas Forests in Richmond, Putney, Islington, Stoke Newington, Shepherd's Bush and Ealing.

**Phone:** 07816 382625

**Timing:** Daily 8:00-22:00, Sat 1st - Mon 24th December 2007.

**Nearest Station:** Kensal Green Tube

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**Hay's Galleria, 55A Tooley Street, SE1 2QN**

## The Christmas Shop

❄️ This is an Aladdin's cave bursting at the seams with enough twinkling bits 'n' bobs and Christmas clutter that Father Christmas' North Pole home could have a complete makeover (without dipping into his present fund).

The Christmas Shop is home to some truly spectacular tat so if you're having a Christmas party and want to deck the halls with boughs of holly and a whole load of foil hanging bells, Buckingham Palace baubles and silver or gold glitter acrylic reindeer (with sleigh) this is the ultimate place to splurge. But the sheer amount of stuff on display means there are some gems here too - you'll be able to pick out glass baubles to match your colour scheme, adorn your tree with pretty lanterns and find some great table decorations. There are also nativity scenes, illuminated houses, stockings and sacks, treetop angels and Christmas crackers among the crowded displays. It's the only official Christmas shop in London and, like stepping through the wardrobe into Narnia, a winter wonderland awaits 12 months a year. Whether the thought of Christmas fills you with bah humbugs or a tinkling of jingle bells, the glitz and sparkle are worth the trip over to Tower Bridge.

**Phone:** 020 7378 1998

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 8:30-18:00 (19:00 throughout December), Sat & Sun 10:30-17:30

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

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**Design Museum, Shad Thames, SE1 2YD**

## Crystal Christmas Workshop

❄️ If your little princess is longing to get her mits on all things sparkly this Christmas and you're tired of saying "don't touch" in every shop, look no further than the Design Museum's Crystal Christmas Workshop. This has to be the only place in London where children are actively encouraged to play with crystals. Not only this but your home can also become a shining example of their handiwork. The sparkles are generously provided by Swarovski and if you've ever been inside one of their shops you'll know there's a glittering array of jewellery, ornaments and stuff for the home. And there's a special range for Christmas too. The best thing about these crystals is that they catch the light beautifully so they look fab with fairy lights and hanging in front of windows. Now's your chance to add a home-made twinkle to your family Christmas by letting your budding designers make their very own decorations, gifts and cards. These workshops are very popular so book early and don't miss out!

For ages 5-11 years.

**Phone:** 020 7940 8783  
**Time:** 14:00-17:00 Sundays 2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd December 2007  
**Pricing:** £7 (Adults), £4 (Children). Children must be accompanied by a paying adult.  
**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS

## Jack's Christmas Decorations Workshop

❄️ If decorating the tree is not so much a "two-colour intricately-designed creation of what's in vogue this season" but more of a "raid the Christmas box and drape it with multi-coloured tinsel, baubles circa 1989 and a crooked, one-eyed Santa", then you must have children. And Jack's Christmas Decorations Workshop at the Barbican is most definitely for you and your Santa's little helpers. Apart from the annual palaver of getting the tree to stand up straight, realising it's not going to happen, chopping a bit off the bottom and then spending hours untangling fairy lights, there's nothing quite like letting your kids know it's time to decorate the tree than getting busy with scissors, glue and glitter. This make-your-own workshop is inspired by the Barbican's family panto 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and so all the decorations are based on characters straight off the stage. It's a great way to get creative this Christmas, entertain your little ones for a couple of hours and fill your tree with a few more wonky but loveable decorations. If you can get along to see the show beforehand, then your kiddies' imaginations will already be brimming with magic and mayhem from the adventures of Jack and co.

For ages 5+ years.

**Phone:** 08451 207550  
**Time:** 13:00-15:00 Sun 16th December 2007  
**Pricing:** £5 per ticket subject to availability. Everyone needs a ticket (no unaccompanied adults).  
**Nearest Station:** Barbican Tube

Regent Street, W1B 5AH

## Liberty Christmas Shop

❄️ Escaping the Christmas crowds on Regent Street and discovering a Liberty Christmas is a truly magical affair, beautifully styled with traditional elegance and gorgeous touches. From glass snow drops and silver stars to striking mirror-effect baubles, Liberty's Christmas Shop is literally a twinkling winter wonderland that cannot fail to ignite your festive spirit. Housed in a striking, timber-framed, Tudor revival building, Liberty's powerful brand extends to the distinctive style of its surroundings. With small, intimate staircases, intricately designed elevators, wooden balconies and glass atriums, this has to be one of the most aesthetically pleasing and unique department stores in the city. Just wandering around it - particularly at Christmas time, when fairy lights adorn the ceiling - is a real joy. Stepping into the Christmas Shop is simply a must-do yuletide experience. This year it's caught in between Narnia (with woodland hues and Snow Queen iciness), glittering vibrancy from the Orient, and a look back at 1950s London with a delicate vintage style. There's also a nod to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory as old-fashioned swirling lollipops and bags of candy jostle for position next to a house made entirely of chocolate.

**Phone:** 020 7734 1234  
**Timing:** Mon to Fri 11:00-21:00, Sat 10:00-20:00, Sun 12:00-18:00  
**Nearest Station:** Oxford Circus Tube

400 Oxford Street, W1A 2LR

## Selfridges Christmas Shop

❄️ This famous department store on Oxford Street prides itself on its consummate flair and sophistication and Christmas is a real chance for these qualities to shine brightly. As well as the huge potential to do all your Christmas shopping in one afternoon (if you've got access to a trust fund), the Selfridges Christmas Shop does a fine line in tree decorations. From 'I Love Selfridges' baubles to faux fruit, there's plenty of inspiration here to transform your tree into a sumptuous spectacle or magic your mantelpiece into a fabulous focal point. A bejewelled theme characterises the various adornments - mini crystal chandeliers, shimmering icicles, tinsel-filled baubles, jewelled butterflies and Blingle Bells (exclusive to Selfridges) can all be found among the decadent displays. There's even an assortment of designer stockings to coax Father Christmas down the chimney and a 'make-your-own baubles' set for a more personal touch. Christmas is concentrated on the lower ground floor (Selfridges' grotto can be visited via the Santa Express train) but the rest of the store, from its cutting-edge window displays and plethora of designer labels to its fashionable Moët Champagne Bar, is the ultimate shopping experience, especially at this time of year.

**Phone:** 0800 123400  
**Timing:** Mon & Wed 9:30-20:00, Tue 9:30-18:00, Thu to Sat 9:30-21:00, Sun 11:30-18:00  
**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th to Fri 21st December 9:30-22:00, Sat 22nd December 9:00-22:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 9:00-17:00 & Wed 26th December (Boxing Day) 9:00-21:00  
**Nearest Station:** Bond Street Tube

54 Sloane Square, SW1W 8AX

## V V Rouleaux

❄️ If you've ever been envious of friends who seem to have Christmas all wrapped up in beautifully-presented gifts, V V Rouleaux will provide all the inspiration you need to become a parcel professional. This shop has ribbons galore, from taffeta and organdie to polka dots and stripes with heaps more feathers, flowers, tassels and trimmings to mix and match. Of course, if you're contemplating a bit of interior designing, this is the place to add the must-have finishing flourishes to your own adventures in style. But whether it's just jazzing up your wrapping technique or branching out to decorate candlesticks, table settings or mantelpieces, this is a treasure trove of imaginative ideas and elegant touches. There's enough sparkle, soft shades and showy splashes to cater for all tastes and styles but you'll need more than a flying visit to truly browse through all the options. For Christmas there's an extensive range of garlands, wreaths and branches complete with jewels, glitter, berries, crystals and even more ribbon than usual. As well as the Sloane Square shop, there's another branch just off of Oxford Street.

**Phone:** 020 7730 3125  
**Timing:** Mon to Sat (excl Wed) 9:30-18:00, Wed 10:30-18:30  
**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

# Cheese & Delis


Turkey is not the most thrilling meat in the world, if truth be told: it's all the trimmings that make Christmas Day. Roast potatoes, sprouts, stilton and port for after, smoked salmon the night before, and a thousand other details need to be just right, and then it hardly matters if your 12lb bird is frozen in the middle and charcoal-encrusted on the outside. We've found you the very best places to buy all those essential bits and pieces and make Christmas easier, combining food-shopping with present-buying, or offering little short-cuts to catering perfection.

## Greengrocers

British supermarkets have improved beyond measure when it comes to meat, cheese and international essentials in recent years, but they remain absolutely feeble when it comes to greens. Giant, glossy, identical strains, flawless and flavourless, dominate the shelves, and the organic sections are seldom better. Wilting herbs and dying vegetables are pre-chopped and packaged, ensuring they cease to be edible within a couple of days of purchase (disastrous over the festive season), while fruit is habitually and hopelessly under ripe. Markets - especially farmers' markets - are the best place to find really tasty veg, but there are also an increasing number of shops sourcing interesting varieties from small producers, with flavours that remind you just how your satsumas, roast potatoes and sprouts ought to taste.

35 Turnham Green Terrace W4 1RG

## Andreas Georghiou & Co

 You can get your entire Christmas sorted on Turnham Green Terrace if you're careful, with a world-class butcher, fishmonger and deli (alongside brilliant gift shops, a proper traditional toy shop, a master-chocolatier and a branch of Waterstones just up the road). Still the stand-out must be this miraculous, organic greengrocer, whose dedication to the finest-tasting produce will revolutionise your sprouts, roasties and chestnut stuffing. With an emphasis on minimising packaging and low carbon footprints they can also help keep Christmas guilt-free.

**Phone:** 020 8995 0140

**Opening:** Mon to Sat 7:00-18:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Turnham Green Tube

44B Pimlico Road, SW1W 8LP

## Daylesford Organic Pimlico

 Lady Carole Bamford's 'Daylesford Organic' is an impressive organic superstore, with a café attached. You could do all your Christmas food shopping here, and be sure of getting great puds, meat and cheese from happy, healthy animals, and even pick up a few beautifully-presented gifts on the way. The true highlight, however, is in the fruit and vegetables section, where seasonal produce comes straight from their kitchen garden. It's here that you'll find the kind of earthy, amusingly-shaped veg that EU regulations and squeamish supermarkets came close to eliminating from UK tables, and that makes you realise that most people live their whole life without finding out what a real potato tastes like.

**Phone:** 020 7881 8060


**Timing:** Mon to Sat 8:00-20:00, Sun 11:00-17:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** As usual. Early closing Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 16:00.

**Nearest Station:** Sloane Square Tube

77-78 Marylebone High Street, W1U 5JX

## The Natural Kitchen

 Hand-planted organic vegetables from Sunnyfields Farm (the supplier of choice for Jamie Oliver's Fifteen, among others) arrive at The Natural Kitchen every morning, to be sold to the well-heeled residents of Mayfair - and to plenty of other people who are more than happy to travel for food of this quality. They specialise in British, seasonal veg - in other words just the kind of thing you'll want to put on the Christmas table. The spacious shop is also a delight, and they hold regular events where you can talk to chefs and suppliers about why the food tastes so good, and how you should prepare it.

**Phone:** 020 7486 8065

**Timing:** Mon to Wed 8:00-19:00, Thu & Fri 8:00-20:00, Sat 8:00-18:00, Sun 10:00-16:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed


**Nearest Station:** Baker Street Tube

## Cheese Shops

Christmas and New Year have traditionally been the time for British cheeses: smooth, stinking blocks of stilton at the centre of the table, or matured cheddar, almost strong enough to burn your mouth, eaten in thick wedges with chutney and oatcakes. Though these matured cheeses are particularly suitable over the bank holidays, when they can be wrapped and refrigerated without losing their flavour and texture, soft cheeses are also becoming increasingly popular, with English goats cheeses, and the semi-liquid French winter cheese, Vacherin, a perfect end to a rich roast. All of the delicatessens previously mentioned in this article have a chiller cabinet of cheese, but if you want huge choice, and specialist advice, you're best advised to try one of London's increasing number of specialist fromageries as listed below...

4 - 5 Leadenhall Market, EC3V 1LR

## Cheese at Leadenhall

 The smelliest spot in Leadenhall Market is this delightful fromagerie, where around 200 varieties of cheese jostle for space with wine, biscuits and harassed City traders under

STRICT orders from their wives to bring a Vacherin back to Hampshire for Christmas Day. Leadenhall Market is well worth dropping in on if you're in the City during the festive season, as it also contains a fantastic fish stall (H S Linwood), and lots of formal wear and accessories shops to buy presents for the man in your life.

Stilton: £16.90/kg  
Vacherin: £16.90/kg

**Phone:** 020 7929 1697

**Timing:** Mon to Tue 9:00-17:00, Wed to Fri 9:00-19:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Monument Tube

2 Moxon Street, W1U 4EW

## La Fromagerie

❄️ If you want to break out of your cheddar comfort-zone, but are bewildered by the choice available (and by the tendency of French cheeses to suddenly collapse into a foul-smelling goo that taints everything in your fridge), then you head to La Fromagerie, where try-before-you-buy is the rule, and the bustling café serves up all kinds of products from the shop. They have courses and tastings, and the staff can advise you on how to construct the perfect cheeseboard to follow any meal, and the wines to go with it. There are branches in Marylebone (details below) and Highbury.

**Phone:** 020 7935 0341

**Timing:** Mon 10:30-19:30, Tue to Fri 8:00-19:30, Sat 9:00-19:00, Sun 10:00-18:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Baker Street Tube

17 Shorts Gardens, WC2H 9UP

## Neal's Yard Dairy Covent Garden

❄️ This most charming of central London cheese shops no longer has its own dairy on-site, though it is still particularly noted for the type of young, soft cheeses it used to make. There's also an impressive range of mature cheese, from their own dairy in Kent and micro-producers throughout Britain. This year, they're offering a quite exceptional stilton-like British cheese, called Stichelton, as the perfect thing to accompany a glass of port after dinner. Details below are for the branch in Covent Garden - which has the advantage of being right at the heart of London's best gift-shopping area. There's also a branch in Borough Market.

Stichelton: £21.60/kg  
Montgomerie's cheddar: £19.55/kg

**Phone:** 020 7240 5700

**Timing:** Mon to Thu 11:00-18:30, Fri & Sat 10:00-18:30

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th to Wed 19th December 9:00-19:00, Thu 20th to Sat 22nd December 7:00 - 19:00, Sun 23rd December 9:00-18:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 8:00-14:00

**Nearest Station:** Covent Garden Tube

## Delicatessens

Whether they're sweetly British or exotically foreign London's delis are a great place to pick up gifts for difficult relatives, sort out some impressive extras for your parties, or find little short-cuts to the perfect Christmas dinner. We won't tell anyone if you don't.

42 Brushfield Street, E1 6AG

## A Gold

❄️ The painted, panelled exterior could come straight from a BBC Dickens adaptation, making A Gold a perfect spot at Christmas. It's London's only delicatessen to specialise entirely in British produce, and if the jams, lemonades and clotted cream fudge seem laughably Enid Blyton-esque, it's also at the forefront of the New British cuisine championed by chefs like Gordon Ramsay and Fergus Henderson. There are excellent meats and cheeses, but its strongest points are in the store-cupboard with the drinks, biscuits and preserves of bygone eras, which make excellent, nostalgic gifts. Pop into the equally beautiful Verde and Co next door (owned by the writer Jeanette Winterson) if you need to complement your shopping with something more continental.

**Phone:** 020 7247 2487

**Timing:** Mon to Fri: 11:00 - 20:00, Sun: 11:00 - 18:00, Closed Sat.

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Liverpool Street Tube / Rail

6 Elgin Crescent, W11 2HX

## The Grocer on Elgin

❄️ On the December days when you don't have to cook roast beef for 11, or get up in the middle of the night to put a 23lb turkey in the oven, it's always tempting to just put your feet up in front of the telly and munch on a ready meal. This is, of course, the worst thing to do if you're wanting to lower the calorie-count in this heavily indulgent season. The Grocer on Elgin's fresh easy-to-prepare meals are a healthier solution when you're too tired to cook. Dishes like lemon and thyme risotto or chicken with Alsace bacon and mushrooms are made on the day with organic, free-range ingredients, and can be microwaved up in minutes. They also make absolutely fantastic fresh breads and patisserie.

Lemon and thyme risotto: £3.85

Chicken with Alsace bacon and mushrooms: £5.50

**Phone:** 020 7221 3844

**Timing:** Shop - Mon to Fri 8:00-20:00, Sat & Sun 8:00-18:00 | Cafe - Mon to Sun 8:00 - 17:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Ladbroke Grove Tube

42 Gloucester Avenue, NW1 8JD

## Melrose and Morgan

❄️ If you want Christmas to be a holiday, rather than simply moving from your normal work to a job as a full-time chef/caterer, then check out Melrose and Morgan. The groceries are excellent, but the real joy is in their pre-prepared meals, with everything from freshly carved roasts to a 'Cheats Christmas in a Box' - a comprehensive selection of Christmas dinner essentials, including pudding, stuffing and even pre-chopped vegetables.

Cheats Christmas (minimum order for 6 people): £49.95  
turkey, £56.95 goose

**Phone:** 020 7722 0011

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 8:00-20:00, Sat 9:00-18:00, Sun 10:00-16:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** As usual. Early closing Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 16:00

**Nearest Station:** Chalk Farm Tube

33 Turnham Green Terrace, W4 1RG

## Mortimer & Bennett

❄️ This small delicatessen becomes almost unbearably crowded in the build-up to Christmas, and not only because the knowledgeable staff and customers always have a thorough gossip. Alongside a world-beating selection of cheeses, salamis, and pates in the chiller cabinet, the back of the shop is full of thrilling, unusual foodie gifts, sourced from micro-producers throughout Europe.

**Phone:** 020 8995 4145

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 8:30-18:00, Sat 8:30-17:30

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Open December Sundays 9:00-16:00. Early-closing Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 15:00. Otherwise usual opening times.

**Nearest Station:** Turnham Green Tube

13-19 Circus Road, NW8 6PB

## Panzer's

❄️ Panzer's have become experts in everything-under-one-roof Christmas shopping for London's homesick Americans, including 'Skippy' peanut butter and 'Oscar Meyer' bacon (which, incidentally, is far superior to any British brand for making stuffing or pigs-in-blankets). Londoners also travel here from all over the capital for their famous smoked salmon, while north London's Jewish community can celebrate Hanukkah or a secular Christmas with kosher hampers.

Smoked salmon: £16/lb

Hampers: £70-£300

**Phone:** 020 7722 8596 / 8162

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 8:00-19:00, Sat 8:00-18:00, Sun 8:00-14:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** As usual

**Nearest Station:** St. John's Wood Tube

# Fish & Fowl

Where once the turkey ruled the roost, now the English are getting more adventurous about their Christmas dinners. Traditionalists are turning back to goose, which ruled our yuletide feasts long before the American upstart gobbled its way into our affections, while the more adventurous are opting for sea bass, beef fillet, legs of lamb, or game. In any case, the trick to a good roast is not spending hours on stuffings and sides, or even getting the cooking time perfect: all you need to do is buy your supplies from someone who knows what they're doing. Here's a selection of London's best...

## Butchers

If your Christmas turkey comes frozen from the supermarket, it's no surprise you only want it once a year. Here's a selection of butchers who can sell you a really tasty bird, or, if turkey doesn't tickle your fancy, varied and tasty, free-range meat of all kinds.

71 Northcote Road, SW11 6PJ

## A Dove & Son

❄️ Clapham's Northcote Road is a gourmet's dream, with interesting oddities like the Hive honey shop, sitting next to world class cheese, fish, bread and wine stores. The crowning glory is this free-range butcher, where you'll find that the queues start to build long before Christmas Day. Pies and suckling pig are on offer as well as the turkeys, and a team of expert butchers can give you all the help you need with preparation.

Bronze free-range turkey: £9.75/kg

Suckling pig: £80 (\*Prices are approx, and subject to availability)

**Phone:** 020 7223 5191

**Timing:** Mon 8:00-16:00, Tue to Sat 8:00-17:30

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th - Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) open daily 7:00-18:00.

**Nearest Station:** Clapham South Tube

117 Mount Street, W1K 3LA

## Allens Butchers of Mount Street

❄️ If money is truly no object - and you fancy a bit of Victorian tradition for Christmas - then you can join The Wolseley, Galvin, Zuma and Scott's as a customer of Britain's oldest butcher. They'll sell you a good turkey, but their real speciality is game, including the wild geese that was originally a British festive fayre staple. Other options include quail (which are cheap, and make for a remarkably easy starter), grouse, woodcock and perfectly hung beef. All the meat is expertly butchered on the huge octagonal block that has dominated the shop floor for over a century.

**Phone:** 020 7499 5831

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 6:00-16:00, Sat 7:00-12:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Fri 21st to Sun 23rd December 6:00-18:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 4:00-16:00.

**Nearest Station:** Bond Street Tube

110 Holland Park Avenue, W11 4UA

## C Lidgate

❄️ This 150-year-old shop scooped the 'British Turkey Butcher of the Year 2007' award, though since Bernard Matthews' Golden Turkey Drummers won something in the same ceremony, we're not quite sure how significant that is. Far more important is the fact that this family-run (for four generations) butcher sources its meat from some of the best micro-producers in the country, as well as the royal estates at Highgrove and Castle Mey. You can be sure that every animal they sell you is from a quality breed, and that they'll be able to tell exactly where it was from, how it was raised and why it tastes so damn delicious.

Bronze turkey: £10.90/kg

**Phone:** 020 7727 8243

**Timing:** Mon to Fri 7:30-18:00, Sat 7:30-17:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th to Fri 21st December 7:00-19:30, Sat 22nd December 6:00-18:30, Sun 23rd December 7:00-14:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 5:00-14:00

**Nearest Station:** Holland Park Tube

365 North End Road, SW6 1NW

## Dickenson's Quality Meats

❄️ Unlike most of the butchers we've listed, Dickenson's is neither noticeably green, nor exceptionally organic. What it offers is meat that's a bit better than the supermarkets' and quite spectacularly cheap. You can build up your carbon footprint with outstanding, perfectly-marbled Brazilian beef fillets, buy vast, unnaturally mammoth chicken breasts for a tiny price, or snap up a 12lb turkey for the same cost as a quail in most of the other butchers in this article. If you think Christmas is, above all, about not losing your home in January because you spent your next mortgage payment on a turkey that has had a more comfortable life than your own children, then Dickenson's is the place to go. If you're down on a Saturday morning, it's also well worth checking out North End Road Market, which has excellent, cheap cheese, vegetable and fish stalls.

Whole beef fillet (1.5-2kg): £25.99

Turkey: £4.40/kg (to be confirmed)

**Phone:** 020 7385 8927

**Opening:** Mon to Sat 9:00-18:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th to Sat 22nd December 2007 7:00-18:00, Sun 23rd December 9:00-16:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 7:00-17:00

**Nearest Station:** West Brompton Tube / Rail

22 Royal Hill, SE10 8RT

## Drings

❄️ Greenwich is a good spot for your Christmas shopping. Beautiful decorations and lots of twee little shops give you the feeling you're in a country village, there are plenty of good boutiques to buy chic gifts, and the market can supply you with grander and more unusual presents. Best of all, poultry specialist Drings of Greenwich is the only London stockist of turkey and geese from Goodman Bros' excellent farm. Drings sits next to The Cheeseboard and grocers The Creaky Shed, making a trio of impressive traditional food shops.

Bronze free-range turkeys: £9.37/kg

Free-range geese: £11.24/kg

**Phone:** 020 8858 4032

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 8:00-17:00, Thu 8:00-13:00. Closed Sun.

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Fri 21st to Sat 22nd December 7:30-17:00, Sun 23rd December 7:30-16:00, Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 7:00-15:00

**Nearest Station:** New Cross Tube

8-10 Moxon Street, W1U 4EW

## Ginger Pig

❄️ This scintillating butcher (right next to La Fromagerie) owns a large Yorkshire farm where animals are raised

with more space and better food than much of Yorkshire's human population. Rare-breed beef, free-range geese, Bronze turkeys, lamb, mutton and delicious gamey Mastergris chickens are all available, but as the name suggests, the real highlights are the pork products. This is the best place in London to buy a ham for the Boxing Day table, and you can also stock up on superb sausages, pork mince and bacon for the turkey trimmings, and all kinds of offal if you're after preparing something fashionably nose-to-tail. Incidentally, if you need a handy takeaway snack to see you through your Christmas shopping, the scotch eggs are quite the best we've ever tasted. Details are given for the branch in Marylebone High Street; there is also a smaller branch in Borough Market.

Free-range turkey: £8.50/kg

Whole ham: £12.50

**Phone:** 020 7935 7788

**Opening:** Mon to Thu 9:00-18:00, Fri & Sat 9:00-18:30, Sun 9:00-15:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Mon 17th December to Saturday 22nd December 9:00-18:30, Sun 23rd December to Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) 9:00-15:00

**Nearest Station:** Baker Street Tube

Central Aisle, Borough Market, SE1 1TL

## Northfield Farm

❄️ If you're bored of turkey, and fancy innovating this Christmas, then Northfield Farm's amazing variety of rare-breed British meats is a good place to start. The unusual sheep, cows and pigs on their large Leicestershire farm produce meat that is wholly unlike anything you'll find on a supermarket shelf, or even in an ordinary organic butcher. They also do fantastic hams, sausages, stuffings and some of the best bacon in the country. The really ambitious Christmas chef can buy a 'three-bird roast' (a small bird stuffed into a medium-sized bird, stuffed into a larger bird).

Bronze turkey: £8.95/kg Free-range goose: £10.50/kg

Three-bird roast: £25.75/kg

Honey-glazed ham: £17.99/kg

**Phone:** 01664 474 271

**Timing:** Thu to Fri 12:00-18:00, Sat 9:00-16:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Weds 19th Dec 9:00-14:00, Thu 20th-Sun 23rd Dec 9:00-18:00, Mon 24th Dec (Christmas Eve) 9:00-15:00

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

5 Clifton Road, Maida Vale, W9 1SZ

## Sheepdrove Organic Family Butchers

❄️ There aren't many butchers' shops whose website advises visitors to "eat less meat", but Sheepdrove organic farm, who produce almost all the products sold in their London shop, is also a serious environmental organisation. Beef, lamb, pork and poultry are all raised with an incredible level of care - the young turkeys are played a soothing rural soundtrack during the time they spend in barns, so that when they are big enough to free-range, they aren't shocked by the birdsong, the wind in the trees, and the distant traffic. Oh, and the automatic feeders are solar powered. Impeccable green credentials lead to superb produce, which also includes honey, vegetables and preserves.

Whole Norfolk Black and Bourbon Red traditional turkey: £12.49/kg (still to be confirmed)

**Phone:** 020 7266 3838

**Opening:** Mon to Fri 9:00-19:00, Sat 9:00-17:00, Sun 10:00-16:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Warwick Avenue Tube

3 Stoney Street, SE1 9AA

## Wyndham House Poultry

❄️ Gordon Ramsay is, we think it's safe to say, a man of fairly exacting standards. So if you do your turkey shopping in the same place he's chosen for his restaurants, you can be reasonably sure of a decent bird. Ducks and game are also on sale, and they have their own home-made chicken stock, which will free you from a messy afternoon playing with carcasses if you're making proper gravy. Since you'll be in the heart of Borough Market, you can also get absolutely all the rest of your Christmas sorted out, and enjoy some of the tastiest takeaway in the capital. Call in advance to place your order though, or you're likely to be disappointed. There is also a less specialised branch in Fulham.

**Phone:** 020 7403 4788

**Opening:** Mon to Fri 8:30-18:00, Sat 8:30-16:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Usual times

**Nearest Station:** London Bridge Tube / Rail

## Fishmongers

Smoked salmon is the traditional Christmas fish, popular not just for its flavour, but for the ease of preparation, and the fact that it won't go off during the festive period. In these days, when the shops are open so much of the time, fresh fish has also begun to find its way onto Christmas tables.

119 Shepherds Bush Road, W6 7LP

## Cape Clear Fish Shop

❄️ Heston Blumenthal is a man obsessed with perfection to a quite unhealthy degree, so it's no surprise that the shop that supplies his Bray restaurant is among the best in London - and has also picked up other prestige customers, including Nobu and Zuma. It's run by former chefs, so prepared dishes like monkfish curry and sea bass escabeche are excellent. They also have a certain flair for the dramatic, and the piles of fish and crustaceans on ice are seldom anything less than spectacular.

Smoked salmon: £7/225g

**Phone:** 020 7751 1609

**Timing:** Tue to Fri 8:00-19:00, Sat 8:00-17:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Goldhawk Road Tube

37 Turnham Green Terrace, W4 1RG

## Covent Garden Fishmongers

❄️ Sustainability is the watchword for this longstanding local favourite, and everything here is impeccably sourced. Christmas shoppers may be more excited by the labour-saving options available, which include ready-made fish soup and first-class potted shrimp and crab. The chatty owner is always helpful and will point you in the direction of anything in his stock he regards as particularly fine.

**Phone:** 020 8995 9273

**Timing:** Mon to Sat 9:00-18:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Turnham Green Tube

201 Kensington Church Street, W8 7LX

## The Fish Shop at Kensington Place

❄️ This tidy little fishmongers attached to a restaurant has the largest and most impressive items of its stock on view, so if you're planning whole sea bass or salmon for a Christmas meal, you'll be able to check out the options immediately. If fillets and fruits de mer are what you're after, ask the (always helpful) staff and they can usually find whatever you're looking for in one of the many fridges and compartments that allows the Fish Shop to offer a selection quite out of proportion to its size. It's also possible to get some of the restaurant's signature dishes pre-prepared to take home and cook. Choosy Kensington foodies - including the River Cafe's Ruth Rodgers - are the main customers, and so standards have to be kept extremely high.

Smoked salmon: £7/225g

**Phone:** 020 7243 6626

**Timing:** Tue to Fri 9:00 to 19:00, Sat 9:00 to 17:00

**Christmas Opening 2007:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Notting Hill Gate Tube

17 The Broadway, N8 8DU

## Walter Purkis & Sons

❄️ The century-old smokehouse at the rear of Walter Purkis provides excellent, and reasonably priced, smoked salmon to both branches (the other is in Muswell Hill) of this family fishmonger. It's the salmon that creates queues every Christmas, but if you're after something a bit more unusual, a twice-weekly delivery brings in shellfish and exotic fish from Europe, and they also get daily supplies of quality fresh fish from Billingsgate Market and fishmongers around the UK.

London Cure smoked salmon: £26.50/Kg

Kosher Pack smoked salmon: £4.50/200g

**Phone:** 020 8340 6281

**Timing:** Tue to Thu & Sat 8:30-17:00, Fri 8:30-17:30

**Christmas Opening 2007:** Tue 18th - Sat 22nd December

8:30-17:00, Sun 23rd December 9:30-16:00, Mon 24th

December (Christmas Eve) 8:30-15:00

**Nearest Station:** Highgate Tube

# Christmas & Boxing Day

It's with much festive spirit that we look forward to our couple of days off over Christmas but then we insist on becoming domestic whirlwinds with all that basting, stuffing, chopping, roasting and stirring, not to mention the mountains of washing-up, during which dad's asleep (and snoring). But while some traditions are worth keeping (all the fun ones like filling stockings and singing carols), it's well worth considering that Christmas Day and Boxing Day could be spent out and about, tucking into yummy food that someone else has prepared and enjoying a thoroughly London Christmas. Whether it's being cosy by a roaring fire, sipping champagne in plush surroundings or going for an invigorating jaunt, we've selected our top restaurants and things to do for a jolly, chilled-out Christmas...

Butlers Wharf Building, 36E Shad Thames, SE1 2YE

## Butlers Wharf Chop House

❄️ For simple elegance and warm style this Christmas, book into Butlers Wharf Chop House for lunch. This is another excellent chance to experience the peace and beauty of the city on December 25th as you amble along the banks of the Thames, taking in the sights from Shakespeare's Globe to Tower Bridge, which is where the restaurant is situated. The view of the majestic bridge rising above the river is nothing short of spectacular from this restaurant and, although it'll be a tad chilly to sit outside on the terrace, you'll still be able to glimpse the atmospheric winter scene from the comfort and serenity of the indoor seating. The focus here is serving up hearty English food in a friendly environment with an emphasis on fish and succulent cuts of meat and the Christmas Day menu is perfectly suited to this year-round custom of cooking classics...with style. Head chef Sylvain Le Gleud has created a choice of four dishes per course, bringing to the table delicacies such as home smoked wood pigeon, citrus baked sea bass and dark chocolate and prune cheesecake as well as the traditional fare of butternut squash soup or smoked salmon, turkey with all the trimmings and Christmas pud.

**Phone:** 020 7403 3403

**Date:** Christmas Day and Boxing Day, 25th & 26th December 2007

**Timing:** Christmas Day 12:00-16:30 | Boxing Day 12:00-15:00

**Pricing:** Christmas Day menu £75 | Boxing Day menu £39

**Nearest Station:** Tower Hill Tube

114 Campden Hill Road, W8 7AR

## Christmas at The Windsor Castle Pub

❄️ The Windsor Castle is one of those pubs that gives you a warm, glowing feeling (and not just because of the beer!). It's the epitome of how taverns used to be in the good ol' days, or at least how we imagine they were, with open fires, snug alcoves and mulled wine on the go. Folk have been warming up around the roaring fireplaces here since 1835 and this year is no exception, making it the perfect place for a pre-lunch pint on Christmas Day. The view has long been obscured but when the pub was built upon the hill you could reputedly see Windsor Castle, 20 miles yonder. Back inside, tiny doors chopped into the oak panelling separate the three bars and only serve to add to the cosy, creaking feel of the place with customers having to navigate their way through candlelit hideaways. They serve up traditional British grub (the proof's in their wide selection of sausages to accompany the mash and gravy) and any night spent here over the festive season can't fail to raise Christmas spirits. If snuggling in front of the fire is high on your Christmas list, go the whole hog and book in for lunch.

**Phone:** 020 7243 9551

**Date:** Christmas Day and Boxing Day, 25th & 26th December 2007

**Timing:** Christmas Day 12:00-18:00 | Boxing Day 12:00-16:00

**Pricing:** Christmas Menu £19.50 per head

**Nearest Station:** Notting Hill Gate Tube

Trafalgar Square, WC2N 5DS

## Christmas Day Walks - Samuel Pepys & Charles Dickens

❄️ Being out and about in the big city on Christmas Day is an experience worth treasuring and the old romantics at London Walks want to bring all the hushed magic of the sleepy streets to us. They say themselves that it's the only day of the year when they've got the streets to themselves and so they put on their scarves and gloves and a generous sprinkling of Christmas cheer and plug into London's rich past. For Christmas Day there are two walks, which follow in the footsteps of Samuel Pepys and Charles Dickens. The Pepys route 'Christmas Morning 1660' explores Whitehall and the St James's district. Walkers can find out about the writer's royal connections, while exploring the 'old palace quarter' and the London of 1660. The afternoon Dickens walk delves into the alleyways off the Strand and Covent Garden, scouring this patch for the novelist's literary inspirations and popular haunts. If you needed any more convincing that this is a glowingly festive thing to do post-church or pre-pub or both, the meeting point is the big tree on Trafalgar Square - ask Father Christmas to send some real-life snow and the picture will be complete. No booking required, just turn up on Christmas Day!

**Phone:** 020 7624 3978

**Date:** Christmas Day, 25th December 2007

**Time:** Samuel Pepys Walk 11:00, Charles Dickens Walk 14:00

**Pricing:** £6 (Adults), £5 (Concs), Free (Under 15s)

**Nearest Station:** Charing Cross Tube / Rail

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Westminster Pier, SW1A 2JH

## Christmas Lunch Cruise

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❄️ If the thought of all that turkey-basting and wrapping cocktail sausages in bacon brings you out in a mild panic, then why not throw caution to the wind and set sail. Literally! Well, apart from the fact that there won't be much in the way of sailing as the boat looks decidedly like it has a motor. But being out on the River Thames and having your Christmas lunch aboard the Millennium Thames cruiser will definitely be a new take on the traditional Christmas. This'll be an absolute hoot if you're spending Christmas with a bunch of friends or if your family's just bored of doing the same old thing every year. London looks great from the water and after a dry sherry to start plus a four-course lunch with all the trimmings (parsnips, Brussels sprouts, cranberry sauce) there'll be no washing-up, just a gentle trip back to shore.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** Christmas Day, 25th December 2007

**Time:** Boarding 12:15, Ends 15:15

**Pricing:** £89.50 per head

**Nearest Station:** Westminster Tube

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The Cinnamon Club, The Old Westminster Library, 30 Great Smith Street, SW1P 3BU

## The Cinnamon Club

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❄️ Not many of us would think of tucking into a curry on Christmas Day but if you'd rather have spices than sprouts, pilau than parsnips and tandoori than turkey, then this festive feast could be just the thing. The Cinnamon Club is at the pinnacle of fine Indian dining and is also located in the magnificent Old Westminster Library for a stately, time-honoured vibe. The late Victorian setting is the perfect place for head chef Vivek Singh, who used to run the kitchens at the Rajvials in Jaipur, where he was charged with treating guests to meals fit for a Maharajah. The kitchen however is far from square and has won much praise for its inventiveness, taking Indian ingredients and cooking techniques, mixing them with local produce and adding some fresh and delicious twists. Mr Singh has created a Christmas menu that is sprinkled with nods to the traditional lunch but with flavours that will tantalise your taste buds with the richness and elegance of Indian food.

**Phone:** 020 7222 2555

**Date:** Christmas Day, 25th December 2007. Closed Boxing Day.

**Timing:** 12:00-14:30 (last orders)

**Pricing:** £75 per head

**Nearest Station:** Westminster Tube

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The Ritz, 150 Piccadilly, W1J 9BR

## Festive Afternoon Tea at The Ritz

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❄️ Tea at The Ritz has to be the London equivalent of Breakfast at Tiffany's - a world-famous brand that captures the essence of each city's history and culture. It remains one of those swanky things to splash out on in London; it says luxury and indulgence, it says impeccable service and it lets us pretend we are descended from old British aristocracy. At Christmas time, the impact of swishing into this grand hotel is magnified as one is greeted in the lobby with cascades of elegant fairy lights and a twinkling Christmas tree. The Palm Court, where afternoon tea is served, is an exemplar of lavish Louis XVI luxury combined with

soothing sophistication. Lofty ceilings, glittering chandeliers and draped curtains all conjure up an image of how the gentry took tea in the days of the Empire. Indeed, Green Park's royal gardens stretching out behind the hotel are a stunning reminder of a time when King Edward VII, Winston Churchill and Charles De Gaulle formed part of the regular stream of royal, aristocratic and noble visitors having a cuppa in Palm Court. Waiters, dressed immaculately in tails, serve up tea with exact precision while a pianist tinkles the ivories. For Christmas the experience is even more indulgent with champers, Christmas cake and mince pies joining the usual array of delicate sandwiches, freshly baked scones and lots of tea. This will make for a truly sumptuous Christmas treat but book early to avoid disappointment and dress up!

**Phone:** 020 7493 8181

**Date:** Christmas Day and Boxing Day, 25th & 26th December 2007

**Timing:** Christmas Day 11:30, 13:30, 15:30, 17:30 and 19:30 | Boxing Day 19:30

**Pricing:** Christmas Day £60 per head, Boxing Day £50 per head

**Nearest Station:** Green Park Tube

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Inn the Park, St James's Park, SW1A 2BA

## Inn The Park

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❄️ This year you could ditch the Boxing Day bubble and squeak for a slightly more elegant meal in the heart of St James's Park. Inn the Park (unfortunate name) is the brainchild of famed restaurateur Oliver Peyton, his idea being to cook up quality alternatives to the soggy sandwiches and warm cola of picnics past and create a new era of 'inn-park' dining. And, it must be said, he's done a remarkable job - simple and seasonal British food is served in a contemporary, no-fuss environment that succeeds in being inviting at the same time. The icing on top is Inn the Park's unrivalled location in the midst of the royal park, overlooking Duck Island and the lake. The stroll through this glorious green expanse to reach the restaurant is another high point - if you stop on the bridge you can look one way to see Buckingham Palace and the other for the London Eye standing picture-perfect behind the Foreign Office. This'll be an excellent afternoon outing the day after Christmas, blowing away the cobwebs with a crisp winter walk and then tucking into a slap-up lunch that is festively traditional and full of homely country kitchen flavours.

**Phone:** 020 7451 9999

**Date:** Boxing Day, 26th December 2007. Closed Christmas Day.

**Timing:** 12:00-19:00

**Pricing:** £29.50 per head

**Nearest Station:** Charing Cross Tube / Rail

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Little Bay, 171 Farringdon Road, EC1R 3AL

## Little Bay

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❄️ For a Christmas Day with more than a touch of flamboyance and frou-frou this is the place to go. Little Bay is pure theatre, like stepping into the Moulin Rouge in its heyday or finding yourself in a 1920s speakeasy, candlelit and avant-garde. You half expect to be surrounded by women wearing fur-trimmed coats and elegantly puffing through their cigarette holders over an aperitif. The decor has the feel of an old theatre bar that's been done-up using the sets of past productions with murals and memorabilia adorning the walls, swathes of turquoise velvet and twisted wire hanging lamps. But for all its showy glamour, the restaurant has no stuffy

pretensions; it's the height of chilled-out charm with a merry, buzzing atmosphere. The food is seriously good value too; you won't believe that you can get such tasty mussels and chips (fried in goose fat) for this price but the menu is a mouth-watering selection of wonderful meat and fish dishes and generous, tempting desserts, all washed down with some jolly good wine. There's a Christmas Day set menu which includes a heartily traditional option with lovely festive flavours but on Boxing Day it's back to business as usual.

**Phone:** 020 7278 1234

**Date:** Christmas Day and Boxing Day, 25th & 26th December 2007

**Timing:** Christmas Day 12:00-18:00 | Boxing Day 12:00-23:30


**Pricing:** Christmas Day set menu £28 | Boxing Day: Three courses without wine £11 (until 19:00), £15 (after 19:00)

**Nearest Station:** Farringdon Tube / Rail

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Serpentine, Hyde Park, W2 2UH

## Peter Pan Cup Swimming Race

 This lot are a hardy bunch but tradition is tradition and members of the Serpentine Swimming Club have been plunging themselves into the lake's icy waters every Christmas Day since 1864. At temperatures of below four degrees Celsius in winter, the swimmers will want to get a wiggle on, so it's lucky that they are all in hot pursuit of the prestigious Peter Pan Cup. The name of the 100-yard race dates back to 1904 when J.M. Barrie, the creator of the boy who refused to grow up, presented the first cup. While most of us are still tucked up in bed or delving into our stocking, the competitors will be lining up (and pretending not to shiver) for their 9am start with a jolly crowd gathered around them to witness the spectacle. It's a great way to get some fresh air on Christmas morning and you'll feel like you've earned your post-lunch snooze. Behind you, Hyde Park offers a wonderful wintry landscape and, if you want to continue the Peter Pan theme, why not nip across to see the famous statue in Kensington Gardens.

Note: you must have competed in the entire Winter Series to take part. Spectators are welcome and the race starts on the south bank of the lake close to the Lido Cafe.

**Date:** Christmas Day 25th December 2007

**Time:** 9:00

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Knightsbridge Tube

# New Year



Or is it called New Year 2008? Everybody we ask seems to have a different opinion. Anyway, whatever it's called, if you're after giant raves, great food, or something completely different, you've come the right place to choose the perfect way to say goodbye to 2007, and usher in 2008. At the moment, it's only the biggest venues that have full details of their NYE events confirmed, but over the next few weeks this article will grow and grow, so if you don't see something you like, keep checking back to see what's been added.

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## Major Nightclubs

The big news this year is the closing of the King's Cross Goods Yard: around 7000 people will be saying goodbye to the four railway arch and warehouse clubs that have led London's nightlife for nigh on 20 years. Alongside this are dozens of huge nights covering every conceivable genre of dance music for you to get your teeth into. It's not cheap, but on a night when even your local is charging a tenner on the door, you know you'll get your money's worth at London's superclubs, as the biggest DJs in the world head to the capital.

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Canvas, Kings Cross Freight Yard, N1 0uZ

## Canvas NYE, feat. secretsundaze, Bugged Out! and Trailer Trash

 Of the three great King's Cross Goods Yard venues, it's Canvas that has the most illustrious history - first as Bagley's and then in its current incarnation - so it's only right that they've attracted the finest DJ line-up to their closing party. Three major clubs have sent their DJs along, and with Andrew Weatherall, Riton, and Carl Craig headlining the three massive dance floors this is surely the best value New Year's Eve in the capital. Canvas will be packed with a crowd that mixes the current generation of ravers with a fair few members of the original Bagley's crew taking a last look at the old place before it gets turned into a gym, three branches of Starbucks and a farmers' market (or whatever the developers are planning to do with it). The real nostalgists should also think about booking tickets for the afterparty across the way in The Cross, where you'll be able to stay in the Goods Yard for an extra few hours before the bulldozers move in.

### Line-up:

Bugged Out!  
Boys Noize  
Andrew Weatherall  
JoJo De Freq  
Nadia Ksaiba  
Matt Walsh

### Secretsundaze:

Carl Craig

Special guest from Innervisions to be announced in December.  
Giles Smith  
James Priestley

#### **Trailer Trash:**

Riton  
Hannah Holland feat. MC Chickaboo  
Mikki Most  
Cormac  
Ian Robinson

**Phone:** 080700 600 100  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 21:00 - 7:00  
**Pricing:** £24.50  
**Nearest Station:** King's Cross Tube / Rail

**Fabric, 77a Charterhouse Street, EC1M 3HN**

## **Fabric New Year**

❄️ Fabric can get pretty packed at the best of times, and is sure to be absolutely rammed in for this party, which combines the urban edge of Fabriclive Fridays with the storming Saturday house music. Worshipped residents Craig Richards and Terry Francis will be holding court in Room One, mixing a distinct blend of the finest house and tech, backed up by the brilliant Ivan Smagghe. Room 2 is breaks and twisted electro, with past masters the Scratch Perverts followed by man of the moment Sinden. If you've never experienced Fabric before this will not be the best way to get the full experience: the club is at its best when only the genius residents are playing, are there are no musical tourists chasing after the big-name DJs. However, we can absolutely guarantee that this night will have some of the best music in the capital - and there are plenty more big names still to be announced - so if you're just after a fat party to usher in 2008, Fabric ought to be near the top of your list.

**Phone:** 08700 600 100  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 21:00 - 9:00  
**Pricing:** £35  
**Nearest Station:** Farringdon Tube / Rail

**Pacha, Terminus Place, SW1V 1JR**

## **Glitterati Hotel**

❄️ Short of chartering a Lear jet and celebrating in Tokyo and New York as well, Glitterati offers the most upmarket clubbing experience in the capital. Punters will be treated to the usual cheerful Pacha brew of disco-tinged house, but for a mere £135 party-goers can book themselves in for the full VIP treatment: champagne reception, a secretive after party, full English breakfast (eurghh) and luxury accommodation. Hotel or no hotel, this is a glam party which draws a slightly older and seriously dressy clubbing crowd. Pacha is a great venue and offers a slice of Ibiza glitz in mid-winter. For sophisticated clubbers prepared to spend a little extra, this is an enticing package. Now in its fourth year, Glitterati is hugely popular so early booking is advised.

**Line-up:**  
Mutany  
Audio Pimps

## **Angel S**

NonStop Heroes  
LOVE-TEC Collective (Conti, Vamp, Muzz)  
Rob Jones & Richie B  
+ Midnight PAs  
Oli Bailey & Noisy  
Thirsty DJs

**Phone:** 020 8989 6712  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** TBC  
**Pricing:** £135 with afterparty, preparty and hotel.  
Otherwise £35  
**Nearest Station:** Victoria Tube / Rail

**IndigO2, Greenwich, SE10 OAX**

## **Hed Kandi**

❄️ They're billing this as Hed Kandi's greatest ever party, and looking at the venue and the line-up, they could well be right. The Indigo club at the O2 is a perfectly designed and shimmeringly new venue, and with the Hed Kandi team going all out for their Showgirls theme - think stilt-walkers, trapeze acts, magic shows, glitter, bubbles and circus performers - the New Year's Eve party is going to make Manumission look like disco night at the Dog and Duck. Phil Faversham leads out the usual Hed Kandi crew, with the addition of a live PA from the amazing Booty Luv, and Stereo Sushi playing in the VIP room. They're also promising 'intelligent bouncers', which would be a remarkable achievement in itself.

#### **Line-up:**

Phil Faversham  
Jim Breese  
Carl Hanaghan  
Rupert Osmond  
Dave Baxter

The Hed Kandi Allstar Band featuring Shena and friends  
Laura on Sax  
Ian C on percussion

Live PA fom Booty Luv

**Phone:** 0871 984 0002  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 22:00 - 05:00  
**Pricing:** £40 early bird, £50 full price, £85-£100 VIP  
**Nearest Station:** North Greenwich Tube

**Infernos, 146 Clapham High Street, SW4 7UH**

## **Infernos New Years Eve**

❄️ Flying the flag for those who wish their uni days had never ended - Infernos is putting on another New Year's party which any student union in the country would be proud of. The only thing that'll be missing is cheap beer. Thousands of incorrigible drunks will spend New Year's by eyeing each other up, dancing to cheese and spilling cocktails all over the place. Infernos is an apt name for this place, which can resemble the third circle of hell to the uninitiated - but we love it. Set over four mammoth floors, this is the ultimate boozy night out, complete with crowd-pleasing music, cool costumes, and plenty of lads and lasses on the pull, and only let down by a slightly feeble 2am finish.

**Phone:** 020 7720 7633  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 20:00 - 2:00  
**Pricing:** £22  
**Nearest Station:** Clapham Common Tube

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The End, 18 West Central Street, WC1A 1JJ

## Layo and Bushwacka vs Sancho Panza

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❄️ This fantastic club boasts one of the biggest, crispest sound-systems in Europe, and their New Year's Eve parties are the stuff of legend. To see in 2008, the club welcomes back Layo and Bushwacka in the main room. The duo came of age at The End and there's no better system in London on which to check out their remarkable skills. They won't be playing one of their celebrated 'All Night Long' sets, however, as Sancho Panza will also be taking a turn in the main room. The Lounge plays host to the Lovebox Allstars, while Simple Records and Freerange take over the AKA Bar.

**Line-up:**  
Main Room  
Olmato (Layo & Bushwacka!) vs. Sancho Panza (Matt Brown & Jimmy K-Tel)

Lounge  
Lovebox All Stars vs. Rant DJs

AKA  
Freerange (Jimpster) vs. Simple Records (Will Saul)

**Phone:** 020 7419 9199  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** To be confirmed  
**Pricing:** £30  
**Nearest Station:** Holborn Tube

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The Key, Lazer Road, N1 9AA

## Platform 12

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❄️ The smallest and smartest of the Goods Yard venues is having its closing party hosted by Platform 12, who've moved on from their pioneering breakbeat days to become a thoroughly entertaining mash-up of all things electronic. It's a perfect night for this venue, with a big crowd of cheery regulars who ensure a friendly atmosphere, and a simple door code - 'no groups of blokes, no fairy wings, absolutely no requests for RnB' - that steers everyone well away from the traditional NYE pitfalls. Sasha collaborator Hybrid will be spinning the tunes at this last chance to dance on the Key's cheery underlit dancefloor.

**Phone:** 020 7837 1027  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 21:00 - 6:00  
**Pricing:** £20 early bird, £30 adv  
**Nearest Station:** King's Cross Tube / Rail

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KOKO, 1a Camden High Street, NW1 7JH

## Push New Year's Eve

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❄️ Originally created as an after-party for those slightly ropey Clapham Common summer festivals, Push has

expanded beyond its neighbourhood to become a destination event for Sunday clubbers throughout south London. For new year, they've abandoned Cla'am altogether, heading up to KOKO. They're also rolling in with some stonking headliners, as Junior Jack & Kid Cr? take charge for the midnight set (though unless you're a Push regular, you probably won't know much about the rest of the line-up). The other big draw is KOKO itself, which is a magnificent place to count down to New Year, with the steep balconies and huge dancefloor all shouting together.

**Line-up:**  
**Main Room**  
Junior Jack & Kid Cr?  
Aaron Baskerville (PUSH Resident)  
Roast Groove (LIVE)  
Jack Michaels  
Adam Price / Jamie Woods  
Richard M

**Room 2: Hosted by Get Diverted**  
Rob Alldritt  
Muzz Khan  
Toby Andrews  
Grant Nichols  
Ollie Hackett  
Thomas Scott-Soundy

**Room 3: Hosted by City Drive**  
Gillian Black  
Alex Acuna  
Matt Prevett  
Teo Krakajax  
Frank van Greunen

**Phone:** 0906 2100 200  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 21:00-6:00  
**Pricing:** £40  
**Nearest Station:** Camden Town Tube

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Clapham Grand, 21-25 St Johns Hill. Battersea, SW11 1TT

## Norman Jay's Good Times New Year's Eve Party 2007!

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❄️ It's an odd combination, this. One of the most respected DJs in the country, Norman Jay, the King of Carnival, Kiss-FM founder, house music pioneer and MBE, is playing at a venue with a Saturday Night Fever-styled dancefloor and a regular crowd that mostly consists of snogging students, public school sixth formers and hugely drunk Antipodeans. We think it might work rather well. Certainly, the joyous cool of Norman's musical selections, which mix classic house with flashes of sunshine RnB, funky hip-hop and anything else he fancies, will be appreciated - and you'd never call the Grand's crowd anything other than up-for-it. He's joined on the decks by regular collaborators and fellow west London legends Ben Westbeech and Bugz in the Attic, and is promising that, for the first time, he'll be incorporating a 'live' element into his set.

**Phone:** 020 7223 6523  
**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007  
**Time:** 21:00-6:00  
**Pricing:** Early Birds £20. Advance £35 .More on the door  
**Nearest Station:** Clapham Junction Rail

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The Island, 180/182 Hungerford Lane, WC2N 5NG

## Smartie Partie

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❄️ This is one of the harder and more hectic of London's major house/tech parties, and will attract a thoroughly messy crowd to this rather smart venue. The big advantage of hitting The Island for New Year's Eve is that it's one of the few decent-sized clubs in the West End that will be playing proper dance music, which means that you can check out the fireworks, have a few drinks around Trafalgar Square and go and do some serious clubbing, without needing to chase down a taxi or brave the London Underground.

### Line-up to be confirmed

**Phone:** 0871 230 1409

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 22:00-6:00

**Pricing:** £30

**Nearest Station:** Embankment Tube

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The Cross, Arches 27-31 York Way, N1 0DB

## Space 24 + The Closing Party

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❄️ After 14 years, 1246 nights, and 809,000 satisfied clubbers, the Cross is hosting its last ever party. It's being forced out of its six legendary arches to make way for the regeneration of King's Cross (i.e. everything that people like about the area is being replaced with flats for yuppies). They're determined to go out with a bang, however, and Ibiza's Space nightclub is hosting a party that will last a full sixteen hours, giving ravers a last chance to say a proper goodbye to this marvellous venue. If this all sounds a little maudlin - and there will certainly be some tears shed, especially by the Friday regulars - there's a pretty impressive house line-up to drive the blues away with DJs Femi B and Bimbo Jones spinning tunes from every year in the life of this club that has existed from the very dawn of house music. The New Year's Eve party (Space 24) and the Closing Party are separately ticketed, so if you've got plans for the evening and still want to say goodbye to the old place, you can always come at 6:00am.

### Line-Up:

Femi B (Defected)

Bimbo Jones

Lee Dagger

Audio Pimps

Nippa Downey

Sick on the Dancefloor

**Phone:** 020 7749 1199

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** Space 24 23:00-6:00 | The Closing Party 6:00-13:00

**Pricing:** Space 24 £40-£50 | The Closing Party £20

**Nearest Station:** King's Cross Tube / Rail

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Turnmills, 63B Clerkenwell Road, EC1M 5NP

## Together

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❄️ The boys and girls behind Together have been successful beyond their wildest dreams this year, reinventing noughties clubbing with a formula that mixes live acts and cutting-edge bands with silly party moments. They'll be pulling out all the stops for December 31st, with a magnificent selection of DJs and musicians and all

kinds of daft antics going on. For the first time in 5 years, there's no Chemical Brothers playing, so partygoers are going to have to make do with Simian Mobile Disco, Mylo and 2ManyDJs, ably supported by acid house maestro Justin Robertson. Streetlife DJs head up Room 2, while the top floor will, in typical Together fashion, be devoted to dressing-up, party games, and figuring out the greatest New Year's Eve soundtrack of all time.

### Line-up:

T1: Main Room

2Manydjs

Mylo (DJ Set)

Simian Mobile Disco

Justin Robertson

Anil Chawla

### T2: Hosted by Streetlife Sessions

Streetlife DJs

Uncle Buck

Riotous Rockers

Devils Gun Sound System

Audio Jackers

### Topfloor:

Hosted by Together All-Stars Vs Hoxton We Have a Problem

**Phone:** 08700 600 100

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 20:00 - 8:00

**Pricing:** Early Bird Tickets £35, Saver Tickets £40, Standard Tickets £45

**Nearest Station:** Farringdon Tube / Rail

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Mass, St. Matthew's Church, SW2 1JF

## Torture Garden New Year Ball

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❄️ Let your fantasies run free at the largest fetish ball in Europe this New Year's Eve, courtesy of the devoted deviants at Torture Garden. This event attracts thousands of revellers each year to break every resolution in the book in the safe, friendly confines of The Mass, where every whim is catered for, including private rooms, dancers and dominatrixes. One of the oddest celebrations in the world, and a night that means more to the guests than just a party. Let yourself go, at the Garden. The organisers do insist that you dress accordingly, and will refuse entry to anyone not wearing proper fetish gear.

**Phone:** 020 7613 4733

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** To be confirmed

**Pricing:** To be confirmed

**Nearest Station:** Brixton Tube

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Ministry of Sound, 103 Gaunt Street, SE1 6DP

## Wonderland New Year's Eve

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❄️ The Wonderland New Year's Eve Party features one of the DJs who first made this venue famous, Mr Rhyiming Slang himself. To be frank, it's a while since Pete Tong's been on the cutting-edge of the club scene, but a big name brings in a big crowd, and the Ministry's will be rammed to the rafters with hard-partying nutters - even if it's the support DJs who'll be providing the best sets. Twelve hours of pounding house

played by some of the biggest names in the business for an up-for-it, international crowd of clubbers.

**Line-up:**

Pete Tong  
D Ramirez  
SOS DJs (Demi, Desyn Masiello, Omid)  
More TBC

**Phone:** 020 7740 8600

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00-9:00

**Pricing:** £45

**Nearest Station:** Elephant and Castle Tube / Rail

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## Bars and Live Music

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There's more going on in London's bars and music venues than we could possibly list. Take That and Girl's Aloud playing at the O2 is clearly the event that the cameras are going to be trained on this year, but some of the best New Year's in London will be happening in the little music pubs and DJ bars that make the capital's nightlife so varied, vibrant and friendly.

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**The Telegraph, 228 Brixton Hill, SW2 1HE**

### Carry on Throbbing

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❄️ Brixton regulars Throb always promise 'It's a party, not a club-night', and their laidback attitude and chat-to-anyone regulars have earned them serious loyalty in the nine years they've been running parties in the capital. They started out in Liverpool, and there's an easygoing attitude to these nights which (along with the dodgy music and hen night fashions) is the closest you'll get in London to a proper Northern house club. This is, so we're told, the very last of their south London bashes, and the theme is 'Nine Years of Throb', so if you've been to one of their previous parties, you're asked to turn up in whatever outfit you wore to that. If you've not been before, check the website for costume ideas ([www.throbbing.info/](http://www.throbbing.info/)), or just bring the silliest clothes you own. The Telegraph has lost a little charm since the refurbishment, but it's still a great place for this sort of night, with cheap drinks, a big dancefloor, and plenty of comfortable places to chill out and shoot the breeze with randoms. Take yourself seriously, and you'll have an awful New Year, but roll in with an open mind and a healthy enthusiasm for getting wrecked, and you'll make some of the best friends you've ever had.

**Phone:** 020 8678 0777

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00 - 06:00

**Pricing:** Non members £20, members £10

**Nearest Station:** Brixton Tube

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**The O2 Arena, Greenwich, SE10 0AX**

### Countdown to Midnight: With Take That and Guests Live at the O2

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❄️ The biggest boy band of the eighties take to the stage of the O2 in what will certainly be Britain's most-watched New Year's Eve celebration in 2007. Gary, Mark, Jason and the other one are your hosts and main attraction in a concert that will also feature The Sugababes, and other special guests yet to be announced. Take That have ten No 1 hits under their belts, which makes them an appropriate act to be counting

down to the bells (though we suspect that they may drop a couple of the more embarrassing early efforts), finishing with a triumphant performance of comeback single 'Shine'. It's a great spot for celebrating at midnight, as the O2 dome sits almost on top of the Greenwich Meridian, the line from which countries all over the world measure the time.

**Phone:** 0871 984 0002

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 20:30

**Pricing:** £99

**Nearest Station:** North Greenwich Tube

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**The Tabernacle, 55-61 Tabernacle Street, EC2A 4LE**

### Hat Club New Year

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❄️ Hat-Club rules. These goodtime kids went from throwing smallish parties for a crowd of mates to regularly selling out the colossal Canvas in 2005. They've deliberately kept things a bit quieter in the last couple of years (the first rule of Hat Club is now 'don't talk about Hat Club') and it's allowed them to keep throwing brilliant, silly parties, as well as the occasional enormous rave. The main thing, of course, is to sort your headgear out: ticket or no ticket, if you forget your hat, you won't get in. This is a great venue and an event organised by some party people who simply want to spread their love of hats and house, but have found an army of followers.

**Line-up to be confirmed.**

**Phone:** 020 7253 5555

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 20:00 - late

**Pricing:** To be confirmed (last year £25)

**Nearest Station:** Old Street Tube

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**The Westbury, 34 Kilburn High Road, NW6 5UA**

### NYE at the Westbury

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❄️ A lot of London pubs cheekily ask their regulars for ten or fifteen quid for the privilege of hanging around in their local with their mates on New Year's Eve, but there's nowhere else in London providing value for money quite like The Westbury. Along with the comfort, friendly faces and low prices that make a pub the perfect spot for welcoming in 2008, they've provided some of the finest hip-hop/breakbeat DJs in the country, in the form of Ninja Tunes pioneer The Herbaliser, former Scratch Pervert Mr Thing and Fabric regular DJ Vadim. It's the kind of line-up you'd happily spend a fortune to watch at a superclub, so to have them spinning out their inimitable party mix in a fun pub is will make for a fantastic occasion.

**Phone:** 020 7625 7500

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 9:00-5:00

**Pricing:** £15

**Nearest Station:** Kilburn Tube

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**Bar Rumba, 36 Shaftesbury Avenue, W1D 7EP**

### NYE Heavy Hitters Old Skool vs New Skool Party

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❄️ The Eclectic Breaks crew have been running parties at this intimate bar for three years now, keeping the spirit of hip-hop alive in the West End, and ensuring that the otherwise

unremarkable Bar Rumba continues to be a major destination for fans of urban music. It's all about party tunes, and the fast-paced mix of hip-hop, reggae, soul, bashment and old skool is accompanied by witty, energetic MCs. DJs on the night include Kiss FMs Manny Norte and 1Xtra's Mista Jam, as well as the usual Getdown crew, and there'll be live PAs from some of the sharpest stars of the UK underground, including Ear Dis, Steelo, and Donao. There's no dress code, but it gets seriously hot in there, so you might as well leave your hats and hoodies behind unless you want your NYE threads drenched in sweat before they've even rung the bells.

**Phone:** 0208 340 1887

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00-05:00

**Pricing:** £30

**Nearest Station:** Piccadilly Circus Tube

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**Kentish Town Forum, 9-17 Highgate Road, NW5 1JY**

## School Disco

❄️ If you can muster a posse of like-minded party animals, why not ring in the New Year at this massive disco party? The dress code may be demeaning but the music is spot on - classic tunes every one, and perfect for drunken dancing. The combination of silly clothes and the special time of year also mean that you are virtually certain to pull, so if you've been feeling a lack of snogs under the mistletoe over the festive season, then this might be the opportunity you've been waiting for. So bad it's good, with lashings of booze and cheery 80s and 90s tunes, this as an unforgettable, albeit embarrassing, way to roll into 2008.

**Phone:** 0871 872 1234

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00 - 4:00

**Pricing:** £40

**Nearest Station:** Kentish Town Tube

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**Big Chill House, 257-259 Pentonville Road, N1 9NL**

## Unabombers

❄️ The Big Chill House is at its best in summer, when the fantastic terrace comes into its own, but being owned by one of the best festivals in the UK ensures that on special occasions like this, they tend to get everything just right. They've certainly picked the ideal DJs to take you into 2008. The Unabombers' Electric Chair nights in Manchester were everything that their reputations suggested, mixing all that was best about the spirit of the Northern Soul and Hacienda eras into a mad mix of house, disco, hip-hop, broken beat, Latin, soul, RnB and techno. A decade later, they've spawned many imitators, but if the music is less full of surprises, they still make an absolutely pounding big club sound from the most unlikely material. Upstairs, Deepsoul 3 keep it a bit more conventional, with some cheery Balearic pop.

**Phone:** 020 7427 2540

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00-4:00

**Pricing:** £20

**Nearest Station:** King's Cross Tube / Rail

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**Barbican Centre, Silk Street, EC2Y 8DS**

## Viennese New Year's Eve Gala

❄️ All the beauty and romance of the music of 19th-century Vienna is captured in this sparkling new programme of favourites from the Strauss family and their contemporaries. The London Philharmonic Orchestra will be directed in the traditional Viennese manner from the violin by John Georgiadis. It's all slightly let-down by the fact that the show ends before midnight, but we assume there'll be something going on at the Barbican that you can join in with if you want to stay up for the bells.

### Including:

Waldmeister Overture

Old England Forever! Polka

New Years Gallop

Where the Lemon Trees Bloom

Cuckoo Polka

Ohne Sorgen Polka

Radetzky March

The Blue Danube Waltz

Champagne Polka

Zivio! March

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Lorina Gore - Soprano

**Phone:** 0207 7638 8891

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 19:30

**Pricing:** £19.50-£37.50

**Nearest Station:** Barbican Tube

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**The Brixton Academy, 211 Stockwell Road, SW9 9SL**

## Xfm NYE

❄️ London's oh-so-credible indie station staged a surprisingly jolly New Year's Eve party last year, with their DJs playing a selection of 2006's best party tunes, and the 'Xfm All-stars' playing covers of recent rock hits and the odd classic. They've scaled things up this year, and are taking over the whole of the Carling Academy Brixton. They're also staying pretty cagey about the line-up, though it remains to be seen whether this means that they have actually got some real stars in, or just that Nick Luscombe is going to be playing challenging electro-mash-ups all night long, and they're hoping to sell a few tickets before telling anyone. Assuming they manage to repeat last year's success, the fifteen quid price tag and reasonably cheap bar (by London New Year standards) make this is quite a bargain. And it's certainly the only place in the world where you'll hear a tribute band playing a Pigeon Detectives song.

**Phone:** 0870 771 2000

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 21:00

**Pricing:** £15

**Nearest Station:** Brixton Tube

### Other Events

There's no law that says you have to spend New Year getting roaring drunk in a sweaty crowd of friends. You could spend it laughing, spinning around on roller-skates, or at a transvestite cabaret. You could even watch the fireworks, go to bed, and then bring your kids out for the parade the next day. There's something for everyone in London on December 31st.

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Comedy Cafe, 66 Rivington Street, EC2A 3AY

## Comedy Cafe New Year's Eve

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❄️ Fifty quid seems a frightening amount of money to pay for a mediocre three-course meal and a few stand-ups, but regulars at the Comedy Cafe will know that this venue seldom puts a foot wrong, and is certain to provide great value for money. The four comedians they've booked - Gordon Southern, Junior Simpson, Glenn Wool and Martin Davis - are very different, but the one thing they all have in common is a fantastic rapport with the audience. The need for a live crowd reacting to them is the reason that none of these extremely funny men have ever made the jump to television comedy, but it's also the reason why this is a perfectly programmed New Year's Eve line-up. While some comedians might struggle to control the raucous New Year crowd, these four will have everyone falling off their chairs laughing - and the atmosphere should stick around for the disco after the show.

**Phone:** New Years' Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** Doors 18:00, Show 21:00, Bar closes 01:30

**Pricing:** £49.50

**Nearest Station:** Old Street Tube

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London Eye, Jubilee Gardens, South Bank, SE1 7PB

## New Year's Eve Fireworks

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❄️ This annual display crams enough firepower for an hour-long show into ten explosive minutes, lighting up the sky for miles around. Launched from the foot of the London Eye from rafts on the Thames, it's visible from most of central London: the basic rule is that if you can see the London Eye, you'll be able to see the fireworks. The biggest party will be in Trafalgar Square (though this has been marred on occasion by heavy-handed policing). The best views are from Victoria Embankment, the South Bank, and Westminster and Waterloo Bridges.

**Phone:** 020 7437 4370

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 23:50 (Hungerford Bridge will be closed after 20:00, and there will also be no entry to Westminster Bridge after 20:00)

**Pricing:** Free

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail

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Volupte, 9 Norwich St, EC4A 1EJ

## New Year's Eve Gangsters and Molls Banquet

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❄️ The crowd at this chic cabaret/bar tend to dress like characters from 1930s films anyway, but, anticipating that for their New Year's Eve Banquet there may be a few tourists down, Volupte have ensured that everybody looks the part by specifying a gangsters and molls dress code. It's a lovely little venue, with a decadent and outrageous style, brilliant retro cocktails and food that's also far better than you'd expect, in a place where it is definitely a secondary consideration to fashion, music and entertainment. If you can tear your eyes away from the extravagantly chic regulars, there'll also be a stage show to enjoy with their usual mixture of cabaret, vaudeville comedy and mild striptease, followed by a night of dancing to jazz, pop rock 'n' roll and whatever else tickles the DJs funny-bone.

**Phone:** 020 7831 1622

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

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**Time:** Dinner 19:00-22:00, club 22:00-3:00

**Pricing:** Three-course banquet and club £149, club £34

**Nearest Station:** Chancery Lane Tube

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Parliament Square to Berkeley Square, SW1P 3PA

## New Year's Day Parade

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❄️ A major American-style parade, with extravagant floats, marching bands from around the country and beyond, street performers and a host of family activities. Around half a million revellers are expected to turn out for this relatively new but hugely popular start to the New Year. Expect vast, Disney-style floats, with plenty of loud music but only a little dancing in the street as many of the parents attending will feel slightly fragile. This is a great way to get 2008 off to an active start, see the streets of London and work off some Christmas flab. The kids will love it as well.

The parade begins at Big Ben at 12:00, and travels up Parliament Street and through to Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus and then proceeds along Piccadilly to finish at 14:45 in Berkeley Street.

**Date:** New Year's Day, 1st January 2008

**Time:** 12:00-14:45

**Pricing:** Free (grandstand tickets available for £15)

**Nearest Station:** Westminster Tube

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Renaissance Rooms, off Miles Street, SW8 1RZ

## Roller Disco

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❄️ There's always the possibility of minor injuries on any proper New Year celebration, but only at Vauxhall's Renaissance Rooms does it almost become a probability, as hundreds of high-speed roller-skated disco dancers attempt to ring in 2008 without colliding. The quality of the skating will probably be pretty high as the most dedicated regulars at this cheery night choose to end 2007 on their wheels, but beginners are always made welcome. The usual soundtrack of funk, soul and disco is great for a party, and all the crashing into each other breaks the ice perfectly - indeed this is one of the most welcoming club nights we've been to in London, even for those who can barely stay vertical in skates. Prices are also very reasonable, with £22 covering your skate hire as well as your entry.

**Phone:** 0207 630 6625

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 20:00-3:00

**Pricing:** £22

**Nearest Station:** Vauxhall Tube / Rail

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Bistrotheque, 23 - 27 Wadeson Street, E2 9DN

## The Lip Sinkers

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❄️ Bistrotheque regulars the Lip Sinkers bring the noble art of lip synching and the chaos of 21st century camp together in a drag act of disturbing brilliance. Kicking off an hour before midnight, they'll be the highlight of the evening at this effortlessly cool Bethnal Green bar/restaurant. In order to see them, you're going to have to go for the special New Year's Eve tasting menu which is a bit of a downside: excellent though the Bistrotheque kitchen is, eight courses might leave you a bit bloated for a big night out. Still, you'll also get to celebrate New Year's Eve with a very chic East London set, and watch one of the capital's finest cabaret acts.

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**Phone:** 020 8983 7900

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** Dinner 19:00-21:00, cabaret 21:00-1:30

**Pricing:** Dinner £55, Cabaret £20

**Nearest Station:** Bethnal Green Tube

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Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, SE1 8XX

## Super Furry Animals: The Best New Year's Eve Party Ever

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❄️ The Southbank Centre is clearly the ideal spot for New Year in London. It's a massive venue with three concert halls, some great bars and restaurants, and fantastic terraces right over the Thames, just at the spot where the fireworks are being let off. The flip side of this is that, as a major publicly-funded arts organisation, it is all a little bit serious. In an attempt to loosen up a bit, they've made the excellent choice of the Super Furry Animals as their party organisers. The Welsh indie band and sometime techno DJ/promoters have a reputation for hard partying, and for making their live shows some of the silliest and most entertaining on the circuit. They're promising a 'surrealist playground defying the logic of time' which is set to include artists, installations, happenings, bands and DJs. It's not cheap, but with Gruff Rhys and his mates in charge, you can be sure that it'll be unlike anything else happening in the capital this year.

**Phone:** 020 7960 4242

**Date:** New Year's Eve, 31st December 2007

**Time:** 20:30

**Pricing:** £50

**Nearest Station:** Waterloo Tube / Rail