



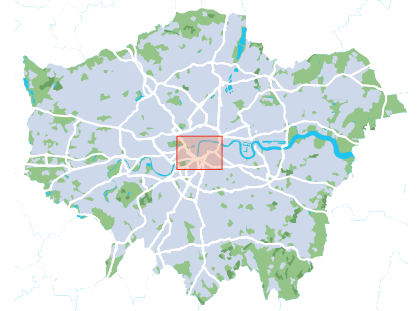
Thames Path south bank



Section 2 of 4

Albert Bridge to Tower Bridge

- Section start:** Albert Bridge
- Nearest stations to start:** Battersea Park
- Section finish:** Tower Bridge
- Nearest stations to finish:** London Bridge
- Section distance:** 6 miles (10 kilometres)

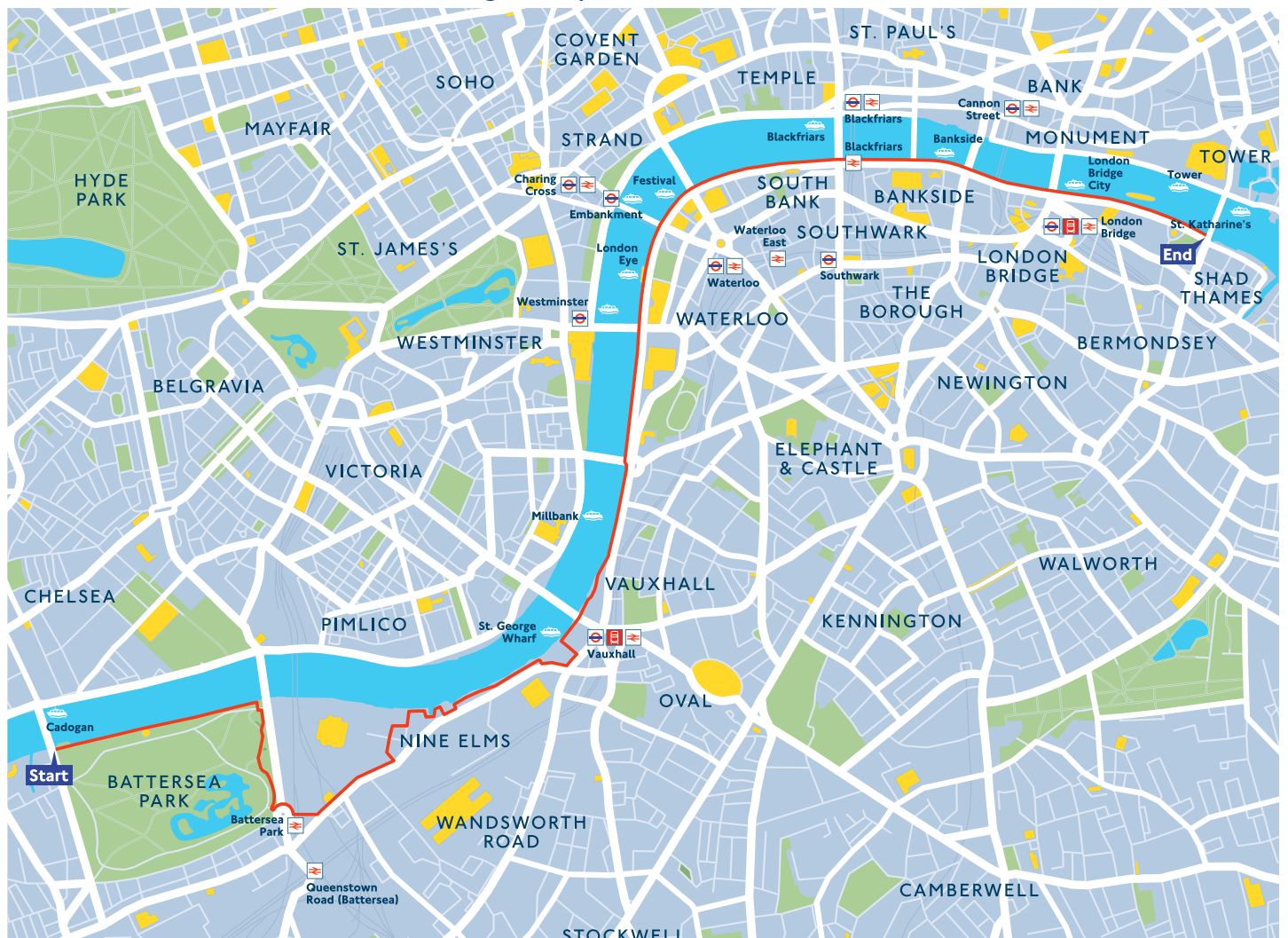


Introduction

Discover London's hidden haunts and most famous sights along this busy, buzzy, spectacular section of the River Thames.

The Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament, St. Paul's Cathedral, Tate Modern and Shakespeare's Globe: the Thames Path links these and other great icons of England in a wonderful, free and easy walk that is simply dripping with history and surging with the excitement of contemporary London life.

London grew up around the Thames with this part of the river at its very heart. From elegant Chelsea to the mighty Tower of London, this section of the Thames Path reflects the history, heritage, architecture and activities that make this one of the great capital cities of the world.



Key

- Thames Path
- London Underground station
- National Rail station
- Docklands Light Railway station
- River service pier
- Bus station
- See inset map for enhanced detail in this area

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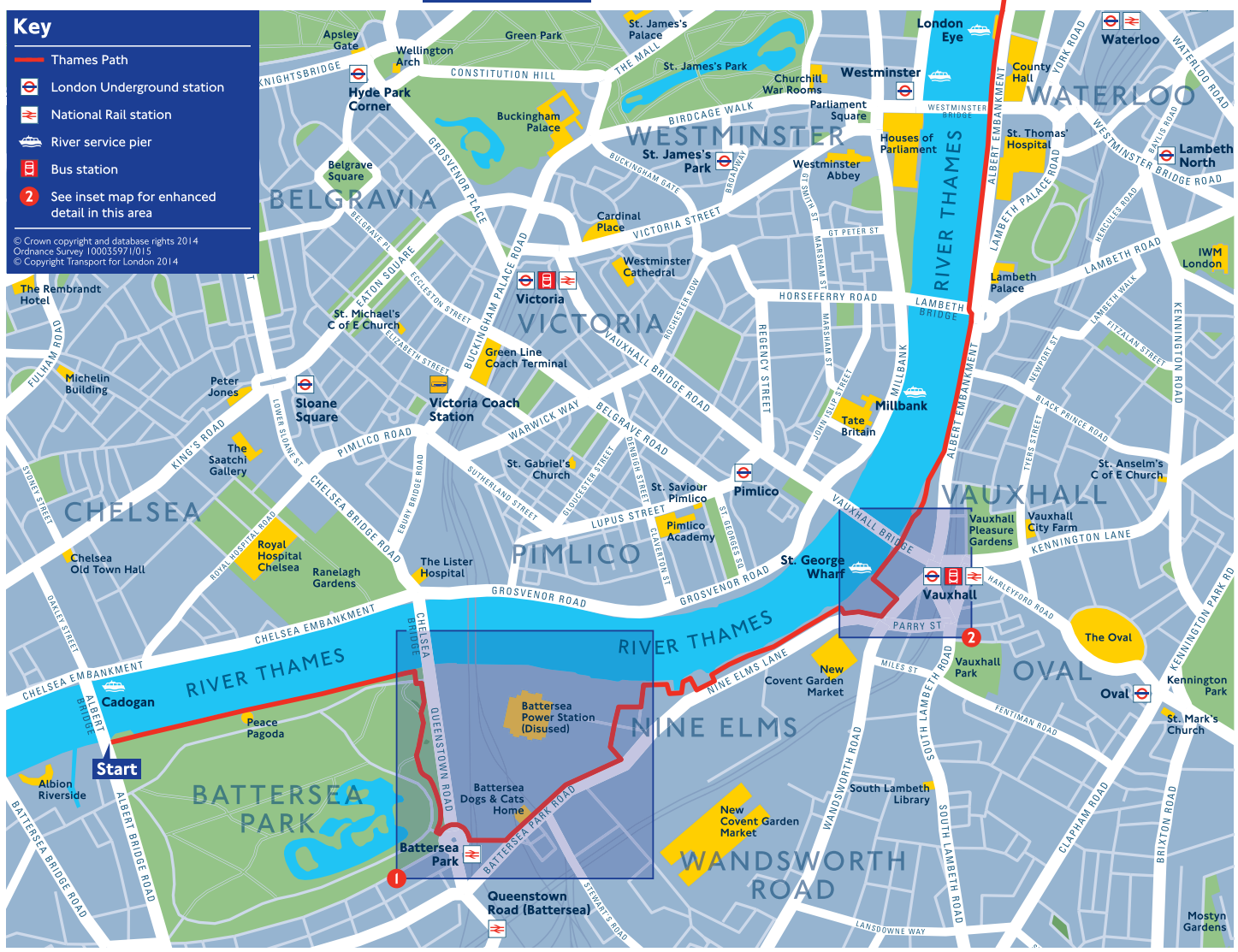


◀ Continues

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Directions



If you are starting from Battersea Park station, turn right from the station and right again onto Queenstown Road. Cross the roundabout and enter Battersea Park to your left. Follow the path within the park north, keeping the boating lake on your left. When you reach the river, turn left and continue until you get to Albert Bridge.

From Albert Bridge set off with the Thames on the left (walking downstream) and immediately go through a small pedestrian gate into Battersea Park to continue along the embankment.

Battersea Park's 200 acres are well worth exploring. Some consider it to be the most interesting of all the London Parks. It was officially opened in 1858 by Queen Victoria. 750,000 tons material excavated from Surrey Docks was used to raise the level of the site and create the ground shaping. (At low tide it is possible to see how much the river embankment has been raised to create the park). In 1854 the carriage drives, lake and mounding were designed and built. Battersea Park includes a sub-tropical garden, inspired by the designer John Gibson's plant-hunting mission to India.

Did you know?

During both wars, anti-aircraft guns and barrage balloons were installed to help protect London from enemy air raids. Shelters were dug and part of the park was turned over to allotments and a pig farm. After the Second World War, The Festival Pleasure Gardens for the Festival of Britain, were designed here. Thirty-seven acres of the park were developed to form the Pleasure Gardens in 1951. They were popular until the large funfair was removed in 1974. Wandsworth Council inherited the park in 1986 and has been restoring it ever since.

Follow the Thames, past the Peace Pagoda, and just before Chelsea Bridge the path branches away from the river to cross Carriage Drive North. Follow the Thames Path signs on the other side to meander through to the south-east corner of the park at the bottom of Queenstown Road.



Exit through the main gates at Queen's Circus, turn left and cross Queenstown Road, to follow the pavement along a curve towards the railway bridge. Follow Prince of Wales drive under the railway on to Battersea Park Road. Battersea Park railway station is just around the corner.

Battersea Dogs and Cats Home is on the way. Opened in 1860 it has taken in countless animals in need, including Shackleton's Antarctic team of dogs that drew the sledges in the expedition of 1911 and the pets of soldiers serving in World War I.

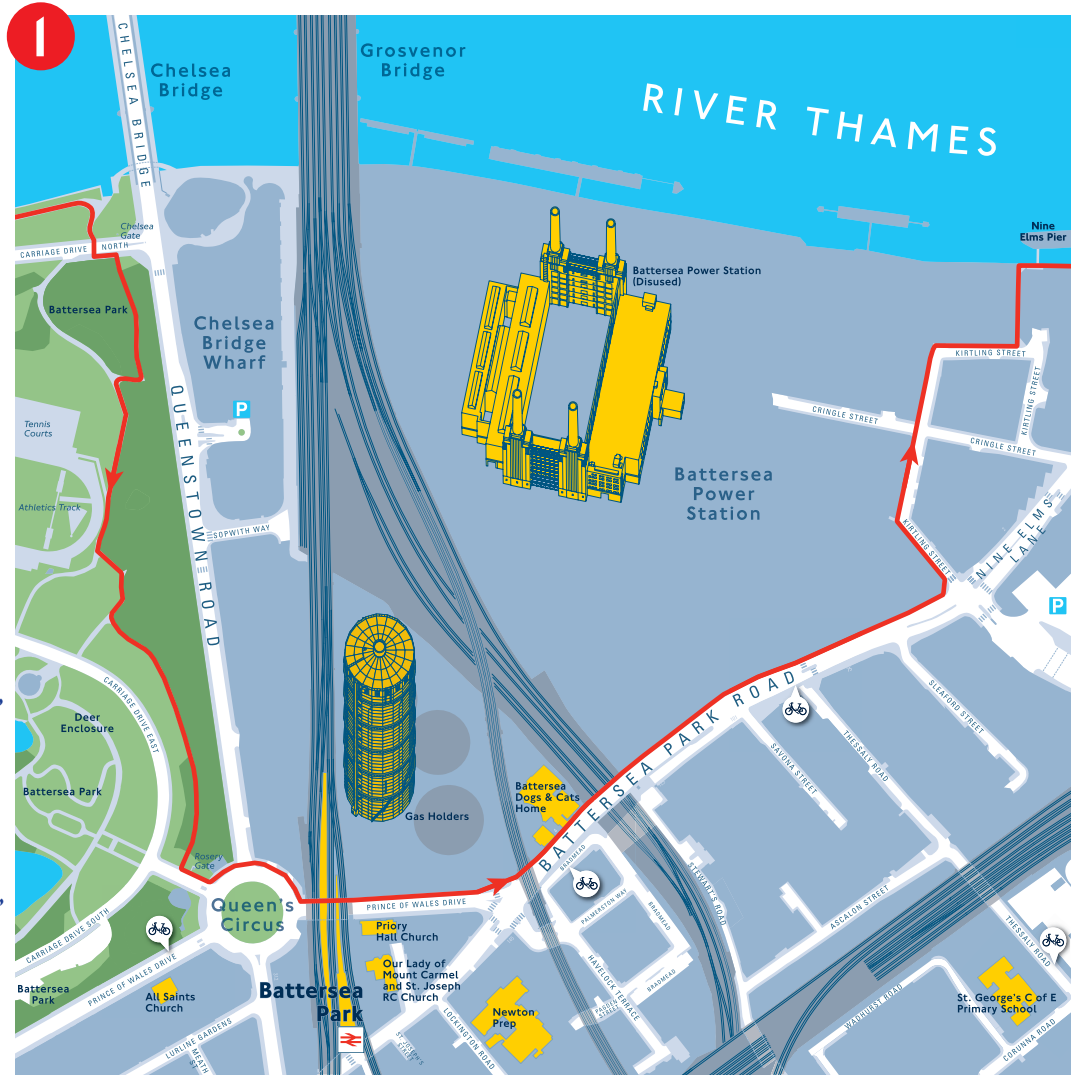
Turn left down Kirtling Street towards the iconic chimneys of Battersea Power Station.

Did you know?

Numerous plans have been designed for this site since its closure in 1983 including an indoor theme park and shopping centre but the massive redevelopment is now underway with the power station as the centrepiece. The new City Quarter being created will allow a missing link of the Thames Path to be opened up in due course.

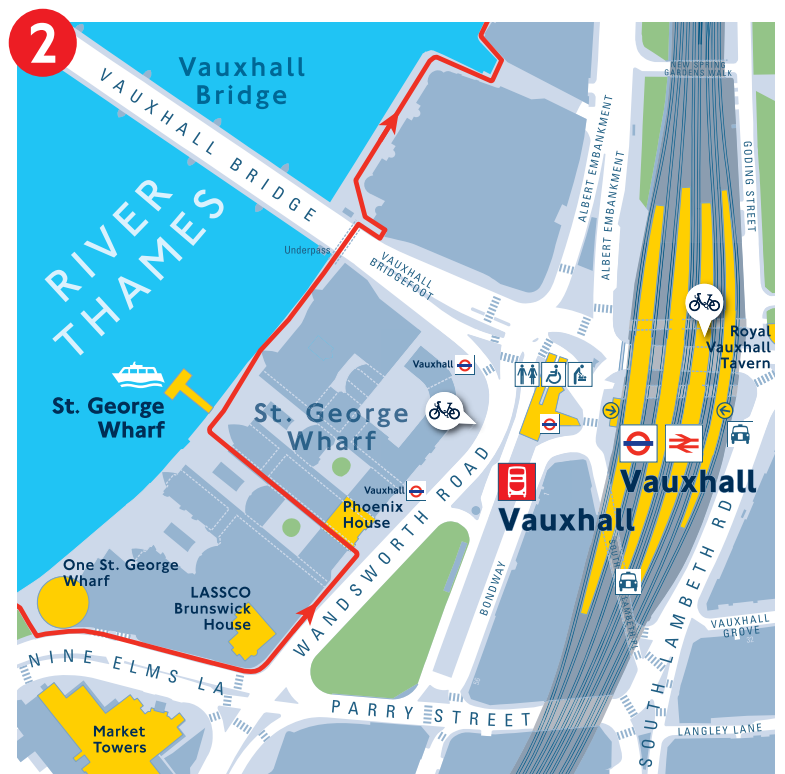
1 The Power Station was built in the 1930s and is just over six acres - it is big enough to hold both Trafalgar Square and St. Paul's Cathedral. It was designed by the same man responsible for the iconic telephone box.

For now, follow Kirtling Street, crossing the junction at Cringle Street, and round to the right and then left, turning back to the Thames at Tideway Walk. Here there is a mixture of houseboats, complete with roof gardens, sheltered by a staithe in the river. Follow the Thames Path signs round a couple of slipways, the second one of which leads briefly to busy Nine Elms Lane before returning to the riverside.



Now follow William Henry Walk with its landscaped spaces and new riverside blocks. On the opposite bank is Westminster Boating Base so sailing boats are often on the water here. The path then leaves William Henry Walk to join Nine Elms Lane again.

2 Turn left onto the main road and bear left at the major junction to head down Wandsworth Road. Take a left into St. George Wharf just before Phoenix House heading back towards the river. At the pier, turn right and continue along the river towards Vauxhall Bridge.



Did you know?

Vauxhall transport interchange combines buses, trains and the Victoria line. Its dramatic solar panel roof like a ski slope was designed by Arup after winning a competition in 2002. Costing £4 million, the 12 metre-wide, 200 metre-long stainless steel roof rises up 20 degrees and is a significant landmark at this busy intersection.

Head under Vauxhall Bridge, passing the futuristic headquarters of MI6, as also featured in many films. Stay with the river to emerge onto the Albert Embankment, with Tate Britain across the river. Pass the London Fire Brigade Headquarters and Lambeth River Fire Station, before ducking under Lambeth Bridge.

Beyond Lambeth Palace is St. Thomas' Hospital, and the Florence Nightingale Museum where collections of personal artefacts illuminate the life and work of 'The Lady of the Lamp' who did so much to help those wounded in the Crimean War.

From here, take the zig zag passageway under Westminster Bridge and emerge into the hubbub of activity around County Hall, former home of the Greater London Council. This imposing edifice now houses, among other attractions, a hotel, the Sea Life London Aquarium and London Dungeon.

Pick past the larger-than-life Dali statues to the wheel of the London Eye.

Did you know?

The London Eye carries some 15,000 visitors a day in 32 capsules, taking 30 minutes to complete its spectacular revolution.

Passing Jubilee Gardens with its new children's playground, walk under the railway's Hungerford Bridge. The pedestrian bridges on either side were built and named in honour of Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee as the Golden Jubilee Bridge. Approaching Waterloo Bridge, the next landmark is the South Bank Centre.



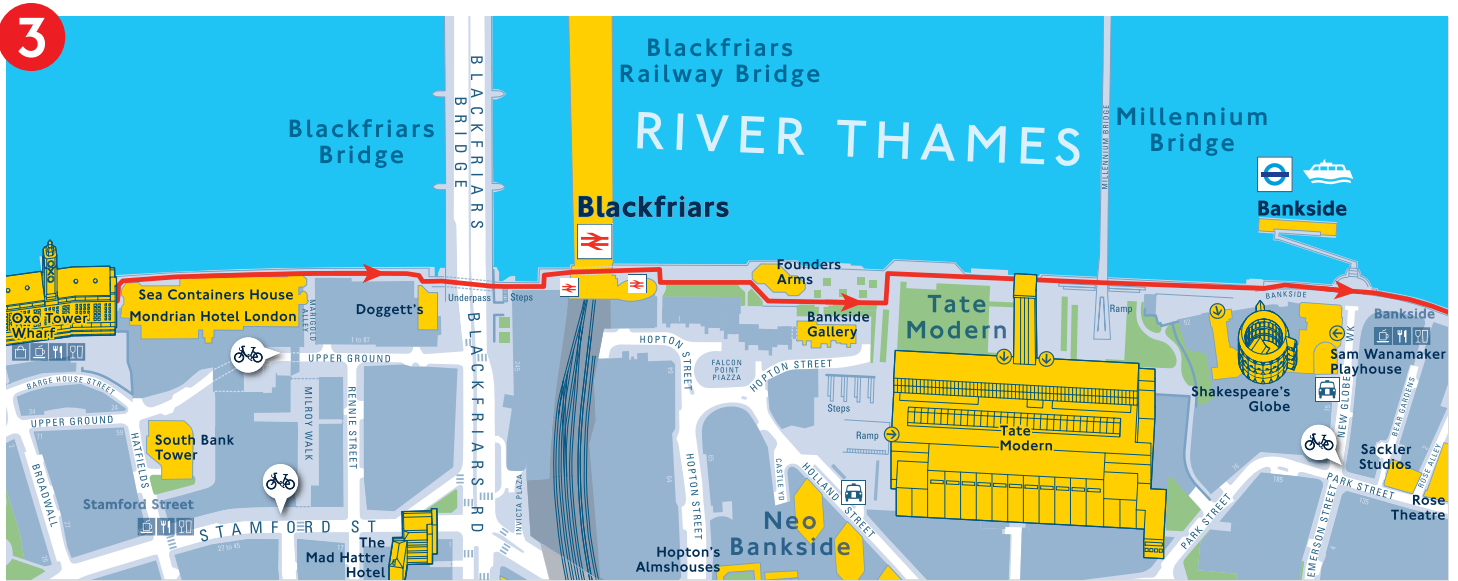
The South Bank Centre is built on the site of the 1951 Festival of Britain. It contains the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Hayward Gallery, with changing exhibitions of modern art, the BFI Southbank and the National Theatre, with its three performance stages.

Next comes The Queen's Walk, part of the 14-mile Jubilee Walkway, also part of the Walk London Network, which buzzes with everything from book stalls to mime artists, with restaurants spilling out onto the waterfront. Look out for paving flags with quotations about the Thames. Walk on, or take a seat, with exhilarating views downstream of the colourful restaurants and shops of Gabriel's Wharf. The Oxo Tower and Bernie Spain Gardens are now just ahead.

Did you know?

The Oxo Tower was originally constructed as a power station for the Post Office towards the end of the 19th century. It was later bought by the manufacturers of Oxo beef stock cubes, for conversion into a cold store. It was mainly rebuilt to an art-deco design between 1928 and 1929 by the architect Albert Moore. Much of the original power station was demolished, but the river facade was retained and extended. The company wanted to include a tower featuring illuminated signs advertising the name of their product but permission was refused. Instead the tower was built with four sets of three vertically-aligned windows, each of which coincidentally happened to be in the shape of a circle, a cross and a circle, cleverly spelling out OXO. Visit the design boutiques, restaurants and galleries, or enjoy a meal from the restaurant at the very top with wonderful views of the city.

3 Continue under Blackfriars Bridge to Bankside and carry on following the riverside walk. The route passes through what was once the 'Liberty' of Bankside which brought Medieval and Tudor crowds flocking to brothels and playhouses, such as The Rose and The Globe, the heart of Shakespeare's London.



Did you know?

Outside the jurisdiction of the City, the infamous Clink prison is here. The Clink was probably the oldest prison for both men and women dating from the 12th century and famously interned Catholic and Protestant dissenters. Burned down during the Gordon Riots of 1780 it was never rebuilt. It gave rise to the slang for being in prison, 'in the clink'. Shakespeare once visited a friend in the Clink.

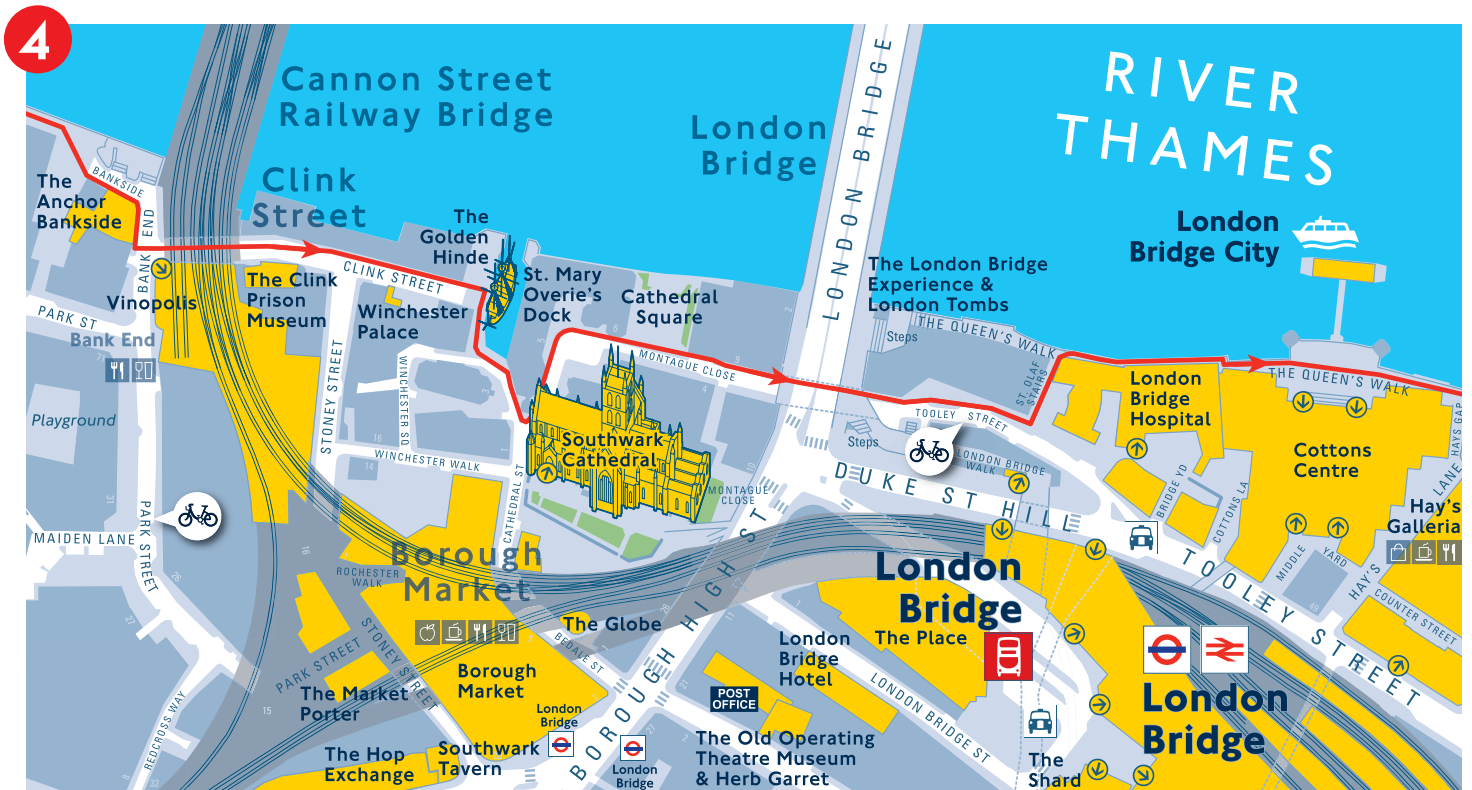
New attractions on Bankside now take their place including the Bankside Gallery. The Tate Modern (the former Bankside Power Station) is ahead. Beyond is Shakespeare's Globe, a faithful reproduction of the 1599 open-air theatre for which Shakespeare wrote many of his plays. The theatre hosts productions from May to September and remains open all year for guided tours and the permanent exhibition.

Note the murals under Southwark Bridge, depicting London's first Frost Fair, held on the ice when the Thames froze over in 1564. The Frost Fair has been revived as an annual Bankside festival in winter with a market, festive music and street theatre. The Anchor pub was where Samuel Pepys watched London burning in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Opposite in the labyrinth of the Victorian railway viaduct is Vinopolis, London's unique wine-tasting attraction.

Did you know?


The surroundings between Southwark and London Bridge are like something out of a Dickens novel. In fact, the 12-year-old Charles Dickens lived in The Borough when his father was locked up in the infamous Marshalsea debtors' prison in 1824 for a debt of £40 and 10 shillings. Dickens was forced to leave school and go to work in a boot polish factory. He subsequently based several of his fictional characters on this experience, most notably Little Dorrit.

 **4** The next landmark along the Thames is the replica of Sir Francis Drake's galleon the Golden Hinde.



Did you know?

This handsome replica has also circumnavigated the world. She was originally known as the Pelican, but renamed by Drake in mid-voyage in 1577, as he prepared to enter the Strait of Magellan. He returned from his year-long voyage laden with amazing treasures.

 Turn inland here to pass by the Anglican Southwark Cathedral - on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays there is also Borough Market here. In fact, this site has been a market area for over 250 years.

Turn left round the Cathedral and continue along the Thames Path under London Bridge, passing Glaziers Hall on the left. Look for a signpost at the end of the reddish stone building saying 'Thames Path east' and also a Jubilee Walkway plaque on the floor - turn left here into St. Olaf Stairs, to reach the Thames. Turn right alongside the river. The looming shape of the warship HMS Belfast appears on the river.

Did you know?

This veteran of the World War II Normandy Landings was involved in the final battle with the German battleship Scharnhorst. Moored at Hay's Wharf (which in its heyday handled so much food it was nicknamed London's Larder) HMS Belfast is open daily to the public.

Walk on past the new offices of More London with numerous cafes and past City Hall, the distorted glass 'helmet or egg' building that houses the offices of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The top of the ten-storey building has a viewing deck running round the riverside face.

Soon the area opens out into Potters Fields, a welcome green break with cafes.

Did you know?

The area was known for the production of English Delftware pottery and the cemeteries for unknown or poor people. The park was once a graveyard, with several burial sites. Some of the gravestones are still visible from the Tooley Street entrance.

On the opposite bank is the Tower of London.

Celebrate arriving at Tower Bridge with a visit to the Tower Bridge Exhibition, which offers superb river views from its high walkway on the Bridge itself (there are steps up to Tower Bridge itself and the exhibition).

To find London Bridge station, retrace your steps along the Thames and walk through Hay's Galleria to reach Tooley Street. London Bridge station is across the road.