

# LONDON CALLING!

FOODIE  
FINDS  
ACROSS  
*the* POND

By CAROLYN O'NEIL

**H**ello from Carolyn in London! After two years of staying close to home in Atlanta, I accepted the invitation to teach for four months at the Florida State University London Study Centre. From January through April, I became a Londoner. The year 2022 marks the fiftieth anniversary of FSU's London program, so as an alumna, I'm thrilled to be celebrating with students and staff across the pond. As soon as I arrived, I began my research on things to do, what to see, and where to eat and drink. Here's a roundup of what's new, notable, and not to miss in London.

A sweet display at Ottolenghi in Chelsea

Photo courtesy of Ottolenghi

**Opposite:** The charming Charlotte Street Hotel

Photo courtesy of Charlotte Street Hotel





LONDON NOW

As international travel restrictions lift and the pandemic fades in the United Kingdom, it’s even easier to visit and enjoy the lovely and lively city of London. Theaters are staging new productions, museums are launching grand exhibits, iconic events such as the Chelsea Flower Show and Royal Ascot are back, the world-renowned culinary scene is hopping, and it’s Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee celebrating her seventieth year on the throne.

If you’ve always loved London or have had it on your travel list, now is a great time to plan a visit as the city ramps up with resilient spirit and style.

“It feels like every London attraction and hotel took advantage of the pandemic to do renovation projects,” says Emily Kanders Goldfischer, the founder and editor of Hertelier.com and London correspondent for LuxuryTravelAdvisor.com. “From refurbished guest rooms to new restaurants and even rooftop pools, every hotel I have been to recently is in top condition and the staff is eager to welcome back international travelers.”

Newbies on the London hotel scene include the Great Scotland Yard Hotel, The Londoner, and the Pan Pacific.

Meanwhile, tradition continues to reign supreme in the hotel market with historic favorites such as the architecturally amazing Fitzroy on Russell Square, the elegant Langham in Marylebone, the tony Connaught in the heart of Mayfair, and the almost secretly situated Stafford near St. James Palace. London’s luxury hotel greats are all spruced up to retain glorious appeal as “your residence whilst in London,” which is printed on many of the hotels’ calling cards.

Most luxury hotels have sophisticated, buzzy, and welcoming cocktail bars even if you’re not staying there. The American Bar at The Stafford is definitely on my not-to-miss list. Get to know the staff at The Stafford, and you may just be invited to tour the hotel’s wine cellar situated below ground in a series of tunnels used as a bomb shelter during the Second World War.

Other hotel highlights include the Charlotte Street Hotel, cheerfully appointed in the heart of Bloomsbury district with an in-house screening room and a cozy drawing room for guests to relax, complete with an honesty bar to mix your end-of-day G&T or perhaps sip a British sparkling wine from the chalky soils of southeast England.

Another small beauty is The Beaumont Hotel, with art deco glamour and its new Le Magritte Bar and Terrace. The dark walnut paneling and deep red leather club chairs set the perfect scene for a whimsical list of cocktails and a bar menu featuring miniature corn dogs and French toast bites topped with black truffles. Located on a quiet garden square, The Beaumont was refurbished in 2021 by New York-based designer Thierry Despont. You’d never know that this elegant building was once a parking garage for Selfridges department store located nearby.



CULINARY ADVENTURES ABOUND

Even on a rainy night, the stars shine all over London’s vibrant and inventive dining scene. There is a myriad of mealtime experiences, from cutting-edge contemporary bistros to world-renowned, Michelin-starred restaurants and cozy neighborhood spots specializing in everything from Turkish to Thai to Italian cuisine. And now that restrictions are lifted, the famous food markets, such as the historic Borough Market founded in 1756, are coming back to life, filled with a locally produced bounty of cheeses, honey, seafood, and freshly baked bread and pastries.

“London is one of the most international cities in the world; you can find any type of cuisine prepared expertly at pretty much every price point,” says Goldfischer. “It’s an incredible city for foodies.”

Here’s a sampling of my favorite foodie finds in London.



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Opposite, clockwise from top left:

The 1920s-inspired Le Magritte Bar at The Beaumont hotel

Photo courtesy of The Beaumont, © Zac and Zac

Pumpkin Pie from Ottolenghi

Celeriac Shawarma from Ottolenghi

Photos courtesy of Ottolenghi

The American Bar at The Stafford in London

Photo courtesy of The Stafford





SUPER NEW

**IL BORRO TUSCAN BISTRO:** So new even some Londoners don't know about it yet, this sleek and modern new restaurant on Berkeley Square is an extension of the famed Ferragamo family's Il Borro country estate in Tuscany. This is Tuscan Italian cuisine at its most fashionable and finest.

*IlBorroTuscanBistro.co.uk*

**Above:** A fresh batch of pastries at Ottolenghi

**Above right:** Ottolenghi serves ready-to-eat meals and sweets visitors can take to go or enjoy while dining in.

Photos courtesy of Ottolenghi

**Opposite top:** The main dining room at Il Borro Tuscan Bistro in London

Photo by Jack Hardy

**Opposite bottom** Green broccoli soup from the Pharmacy

Photo courtesy of the Pharmacy



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SUPER NOTABLE

**THE WOLSELEY:** It's always a good idea to go to The Wolseley. Celebrated for their breakfasts, lauded for lunch, and a destination for dinner as well as cocktails and bites in the bar, this all-day café in the European tradition on London's iconic Piccadilly keeps wowing the well-heeled crowd. We saw Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber dining there with his little dog.

*TheWolseley.com*

**THE GUN:** Their tagline is “get to The Gun,” and you'll enjoy the journey if you hop on a Thames boat, cruise to Canary Wharf, and find The Gun in the Docklands overlooking the river. The building dates back to the eighteenth century, and Lord Horatio Nelson frequented it to visit with Lady Emma Hamilton in an upstairs room. Today it's a gastropub with exceptional food and drink. There's a fireplace to enjoy a whiskey and a gin garden when the weather's right.

*TheGunDocklands.com*

**BERNERS TAVERN:** The wow factor of the floor-to-ceiling art in gilded frames on every wall of this vast room alerts you to memorable moments ahead. The Dover sole, deboned and served from a tableside trolley with a view of the chef brigade working seamlessly in the open kitchen at the back of the room, is all the theater I need in London.

*BernersTavern.com*

**PIED À TERRE:** Located on the storybook restaurant row of Charlotte Street in Bloomsbury, this Michelin-starred restaurant is a jewel box filled with the food art of executive chef Asimakis Chaniotis, who presents fine French cuisine through the lens of his nature-loving Greek heritage. You'll also find a vegan tasting menu voted the number one experience in the UK.

*Pied-a-Terre.co.uk*





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**Above:** Ottolenghi is just one of many charming eateries in Chelsea.

Photo courtesy of Ottolenghi

## LET'S DO LONDON!

An audience with the Queen awaits you. Well, at least an audience with her home, Buckingham Palace, scheduled to open for tours once again from July 22 to October 2, 2022. Book online to see inside the grand palace and its gardens.

“There is no better time to embrace Britain’s royal heritage and regal experiences, including our grand stately homes and royal and historic walking tours,” says Paul Gauger, senior vice president for the Americas at VisitBritain.

One of the year’s biggest celebrations will be in June for the official kickoff to Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Special exhibitions will follow throughout the year, including the Tower of London’s Superbloom display of meadow flowers planted in and around the moat and the reopening of The Royal Mews, showing the Queen’s carriages, cars, and horses. “There is lots of excitement and anticipation for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee,” says Goldfischer. “Nobody does pageantry like the English!”

Maybe I’ll stay just a little while longer. ▼

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*Head to [VisitBritain.org](https://www.visitbritain.org) to start planning your trip.*

*Carolyn O’Neil is an award-winning Atlanta-based food writer who specializes in culinary travel and healthy lifestyles. She believes that travel is the ultimate way to learn about the people of the world and that cuisine is the most exciting way to learn about their histories and cultures. Visit her blog at [TheHappyHealthyKitchen.com](https://TheHappyHealthyKitchen.com).*