

# Churchill & Turen Ltd.

## LONDON ESSENTIALS

“The English have an extraordinary ability for flying into a great calm”  
- Alexander Woollcott

### **THE “IS IT WORTH GOING” SCORE**

100 Points out of a possible 100. The highest score of any city in the world. You simply must go. Preferably, before you see any other city in Europe.

### **THE BEST ADVICE**

- Never assume that any visit to London is your last. It isn't. Plan on seeing sections of the town during your visit, never try to actually know London.
- Try to meet at least one actual Londoner per day. You will be charmed.
- Use public transportation. Only use a taxi once, to get to the theater. Do try to take a double decker bus. With privatization, they're slowly disappearing.
- Call Edwards and Edwards before you leave the States to reserve ticket for at least one play. It's difficult, but try to find a theater that isn't showing something by Andrew Lloyd Weber.
- Do not spend your time trying to find authentic “English food”. It does exist, but what will you do with it when you find it?
- Do not stay in an American hotel. Please.
- Important Rule: If you're spending four or more nights, stay at least one night in a country inn or an British stately home outside the city.

**WHEN TO GO:** Avoid going in June, July, or August unless you like waiting in line with people like yourself. The best months are April, May, September, and the first half of October. March, April, and May have the least rainfall, January and November the most. The secret of London is that it, like so many cities, is at its very best during the off-season. Coldest month is January when temperatures average 45 degrees. Warmest month is July when average temperatures are 75 degrees.

**HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE:** By British Airways flight #298, 747 service from O'Hare. British Airways gets my vote for “The world's most improved airline”. But do keep an eye on Virgin Atlantic. They're coming to Chicago and they are very, very, good indeed. Other alternatives are non-stop flights on American or United Airlines. Both are currently flying the twin-engine 767 as well as the newer, more comfortable 777.

**GETTING DOWNTOWN FROM THE AIRPORT:** Heathrow is about 15 miles from central London. Gatwick is about 30.

There are several alternatives from Heathrow:

# 1 - Subway - Trains on The Piccadilly Line depart every 5 minutes. It's a 45-Minute trip.

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# 2 - Bus - Airbus A1 or A2 departs every 20 minutes. The one hour trip stops at Cromwell Road, Hyde Park Corner, and Victoria Coach Station. Trip takes about an hour. National Express or Greenline bus # 767 also go to Victoria Station. But the Airbus is less expensive. (5 pounds)

# 3 - Taxi - Figure 45 minutes and an average of 34 pounds or roughly \$50.00. Only rank tourists or the very wealthy use this method.

## **WHERE TO STAY IF THE COMPANY IS PAYING OR YOU'VE WON THE LOTTERY:**

**Claridge's** - The epitome of tradition plus the best concierge service in the world. Regulars still find the type of pillow they prefer waiting as well as their preferred brand of soap and lotion. Churchill & Turen clients have commented on Manager Ron Jones 2-1 staff-guest ratio.

**The Connaught** - This is really a 90-room townhouse with exquisite personal service and two Michelin-star restaurants on-site. Staff greets you in morning coats - that is if you can somehow secure a reservation.

**The Savoy** - On the Strand, this 106 year-old lady still attracts the best of the entertainment world. The Aga Kahn once had the grand ballroom flooded, and flew over actual Gondoliers and their gondolas from Venice for a Venetian night that saw guests rowed across the room while being serenaded. During the worst days of WW II, when London was being blitzed, a group of hardy souls formed a small club that would meet on the Savoy's roof and hit golf balls off into the distance, totally ignoring "incoming". This place has style.

## **HOTELS: MY PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Goring** - I like this one so much that I hesitate to list it. One of the few remaining "family-owned" hotels, the Goring was built in 1910 and is said to have been the first hotel to have central heating and a bathroom in every room. The founder's grandson, George Goring, carries on a fine tradition of personal service. Very British. Located behind Buckingham Palace. Ask for a garden view. Churchill & Turen's first choice in London.

**Blake's** - When Hollywood stars with a bit of class head for London, this is the first place they try to book. Located near the Gloucester street underground station, Blake's is a 52-room complex of Victorian townhomes with exceptional levels of service. Don't be surprised to see one or more of the Royals dining in the basement restaurant.

**22 Jermyn Street** - A great location smack in the heart of the West End, near theaters and shopping. A very smart 18-room boutique hotel. Built in 1870, this place feels very much like a private home. Baby-sitting services available.

**The Beaufort** - Just around the corner from Harrod's, only the best department store in the world, this gracious hotel offers upgraded accommodations in two Victorian homes. This Knightsbridge classic is watched over by its owner, London TV producer, Diana Wallis, who has created an extremely comfortable hotel with an unbeatable location. No on-site restaurant.

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**Fortyseven Park Street** - With an excellent location near Hyde Park, this 52 room apartment-hotel is nicely decorated and features marble bathrooms and full kitchens. Amazingly, one of London's top three restaurants, Le Gavroche, is downstairs and provides "room service".

**Brown's** - A very, very British 109-room hotel that was created by James Brown, no, not that one. I'm talking about the manservant of Lord Byron) in 1837. Browns is actually 11 townhouses located on two streets just off of Berkeley Square in the upscale Mayfair district. Antiques abound. Kipling used to hang out here and Teddy Roosevelt stayed here on his honeymoon. There is a formal afternoon tea service with dress expectations.

**Number Sixteen** - This moderately-priced bed and breakfast is actually four Victorian (what else) townhouses linked together and surrounded by lovely front and rear gardens. It is located in South Kensington and has rates under \$200.

## **RESTAURANTS: MY PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**La Tante Claire** - 68 Royal Hospital Rd. - Three Michelin stars for this restaurant have created long lines for the beautifully prepared fish dishes. You can get a great lunch here for about \$50, a relative bargain given the quality.

**Le Gavroche** - 43 Upper Brook Street - Book weeks in advance. Quite expensive, *the* place for a special evening. The Roux brothers have created Britain's best restaurant. Consider ordering the lobster with snails or the Gavroche Duckling served in a pot-au-feu. Incredible wine list. Albert Roux once cooked for the Rothchild's.

**Green's** - 36 Duke Street - Excellent Dover Sole and other treats on a very English menu. This spot is frequented by bankers and barristers. Try the roasted woodcock or the King prawns. Or try oysters, champagne and grouse. The Oysters can be trusted here. As far as the barristers go, you're on your own.

**Greig's Grill** - 26 Bruton Place - Big steaks, spectacular baked potatoes, and a choice of displayed raw cuts of meat or Scotch Salmon, make this a favorite haunt of visiting Americans. This is a wonderful choice after the theater.

**The Gay Hussar** - 2 Greek St. - Long one of my favorites, this intimate restaurant serves the best Hungarian cuisine outside Budapest. Even the goulash is memorable. Try the chicken paprikash and please leave room for the strudel. Don't be put off by the somewhat shady look of the side street. The clientele includes lots people who work in "publishing".

**Rules** - 35 Maiden Lane - This would be my first recommendation for British food in an elegant, Victorian setting. There has been a restaurant on this site since 1798. Walls are absolutely covered with photos and sketches of British actors and authors. Try the smoked salmon with spiced apricots and move on to poached salmon, followed, perhaps, by Rules famed treacle sponge pudding. This is a "required" London dining experience.

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**Sweetings** - 39 Queen Victoria St. - A memorable fish house in the heart of London's financial district. Try the delicately sautéed brill or haddock and don't try getting a dinner reservation. Sweetings only serves lunch.

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