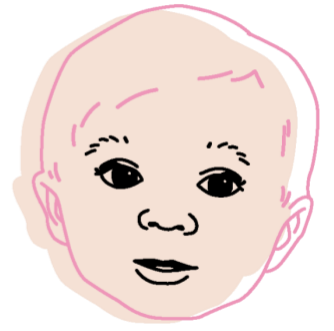


BABLANDS



Bablands / January 23, 2020 / Activities

Soak up some history avec l'enfant at a Bring Your Baby Guided London Walk



What?: This is another of those wonderful activities designed to keep people who have both small children and interests distinct from their small children from losing their minds. It's in the same vein as *Wake Up Gigs*, *Bach to Baby*, *Bottle Apostle* mums' wine tasting and *Mindr*, although it's the first bring-your-baby history tour I've come across, so it's already winning on the originality front. Me and my friend Elle actually tried one of Lucy's history walks way back in the summer but made the mistake of bringing our then-six-months-younger two and three year olds with us (it was, at the time, advertised on Hoop as for 0-5s), and to be honest I'm amazed we even got an hour in before abandoning ship and heading for the nearest playground. I told Lucy I'd be back with just the baby at some point, and half a year later we made it – because apparently that's how long it takes to organise your partner into taking your eldest child so you can get some one-on-one time with your (now so massive she's basically a grown woman) baby.

December's walk was a lovely, festive Dickensian Alleyways tour around the old, narrow (and thankfully mostly covered because it was pissing it down for most of the two hours) City streets. We covered just over a dozen sites that Dickens mentioned in his writing, from the churchyards where he sought solace from the hustle and bustle of the city to his favourite chop house and his most famous characters' homes and haunts. Points of particular interest included the Royal Exchange, which is where Ebenezer Scrooge witnesses colleagues discussing his death, courtesy of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, but is now a sort of posh shopping mall with oyster and caviar bars and – crucially – nice baby changing; and Leadenhall Market, where the prize turkey Scrooge orders the passing boy to fetch for the Cratchits would likely have been purchased. Actually there was a lot of stuff related to A Christmas Carol on this walk, which was fine by me since it's my favourite, although you should know I'm still recovering from the Dickens degree module (circa 2006 and I'm still traumatised) where we had to read one 600-page novel a week, so this was basically aversion therapy for me.

In terms of how the walk actually works (because two hours of someone bombarding you with historical facts/fiction sounds pretty intense) it's actually really chilled – in fact it only lasts so long *because* it's so chilled. The walking pace is slow, the information is punchy, interesting and to the point, and there are plenty of potential baby-changing/feeding and coffee stops along the way. Lucy is a mother of a young child herself and goes out of her way to make sure everyone is comfortable – in fact she even stood in the road lollipop lady-style so we didn't even have to worry about checking for traffic before crossing the road. There's no stressing out about your baby being fractious like there is when you're somewhere with non-parents because *all of us* (except Lucy) were toting small, unhappy people, and of course there's always the option to pop off on your own for 15 minutes and catch the group up when you've sorted yourself out, or just to bugger off altogether if your baby's really not feeling it.

Where and When?: Walks run across London on an ad-hoc basis but this one took place on a December afternoon around Bank station.

Best Bits: I loved this so much. Such a lovely bunch of parents and Lucy is so thoughtful and welcoming. I actually don't think I'd been on a history tour at all before this, so being able to experience it with Roro and on a subject I'm familiar with (if *very* rusty) was amazing.

Worst Bits: It was raining, which was a bummer but I don't think it spoilt it too much.

Facilities: We stopped at places with toilets, baby change and coffee.

Cost: £14 per adult (babies go free).

Would We Come Back?: Yes!