



DECOR TOURS
London

LONDON DISPATCH

*No. 3: Apps so You Can
London Like a Local*

This edition we focus on the necessary apps, the useful apps, the important apps, the quirky apps, etc. There's only one app that's required...but the rest are highly recommended!

Our Must-Have App

You will need to download WhatsApp to your phone and be comfortable using it, as this will be our primary form of group communication in London.

WhatsApp is a chat service, like you already have as a feature on your phone, but it allows us to seamlessly share texts, voice messages, high-res photos, documents (such as our schedule while in London), and more. Because it is platform-agnostic, all communication is easily accessible



by everyone in the group, whether you have an iPhone or an Android. Plus, many businesses in Europe use WhatsApp as a means of customer communication. Trust us, it makes scoring a reservation or booking a service much easier than trying to get through with a call!

How to get started with WhatsApp

WhatsApp is available for both Android and iPhone; you can find it on the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. The system requirements are Android 4.1 or newer or iOS 12 or newer, so compatibility shouldn't be a problem. The only requirement is an active cellular plan, as registration is based on your cell phone number.

Setting up WhatsApp is very straightforward. When you open the app for the first time, you'll be guided through a few set-up steps. Enter your mobile phone number when prompted, and this becomes your WhatsApp "address" and account ID. An SMS message will be sent to confirm that you actually own the number in question.

If you're using an Android phone, WhatsApp will pick up this SMS message automatically in most cases and carry on with the registration process. Registering WhatsApp on an iPhone may require you to manually punch in the

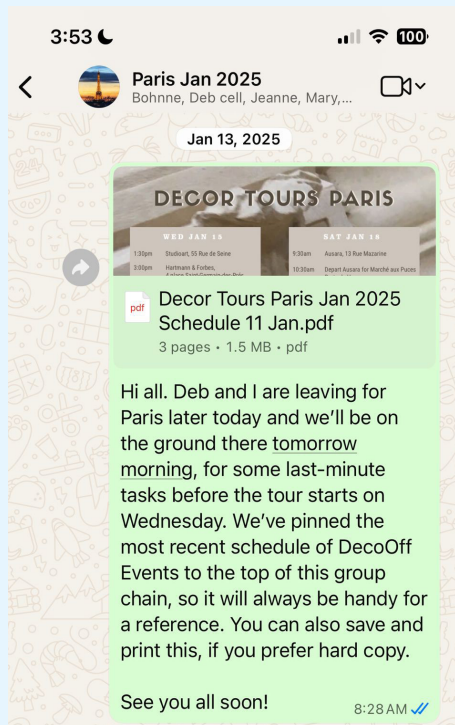
six-digit code, or at least tap on the autofill code above your keyboard, much like how SMS two-factor authentication works in other apps.

Once your phone number has been registered, there are a couple more prompts including permission to access your contacts and photos—both completely optional—after which you'll be ready to go.

Look for Deb Barrett at 630 207 0357 and Susan Schultz at 212 352 9968. Send us a message asking to be added to the London May 2026 group and we'll send you a confirmation. That's it for now...but the sooner you sign up, the sooner you'll start receiving additional info on London events—and not just those associated Decor Tours.

WhatsApp on your computer

You can get WhatsApp on your Mac or Windows PC, but while the Mac version works for lap/desktops, iPads and Apple Watch, the Android version is lap/desktop only.



For Androids, it's important to note that this isn't a standalone app. Instead, it's a companion to WhatsApp on your Android phone.

To use WhatsApp on another device, you'll need to link your computer with WhatsApp using your phone. The first time you open WhatsApp Desktop, you'll be shown instructions on how to do this, including a QR code you can scan from WhatsApp on your phone. If you're bringing a laptop or Apple tablet, this is sometimes an easier way to catch up on and respond to group messages once we're all back in our hotel rooms!

IMPORTANT! You *must* have WhatsApp active and be part of the London May 2026 group in order to participate in all Decor Tours group events.

Link for [iPhone](#), and [Android](#), and for [Apple lap/desktop](#) (scroll down on this page for ipad) and [PC lap/desktop](#).

Getting Around

We'll be walking (a lot), taking London Buses and the Underground (a lot), but sometimes all you want to do is get off your feet and get back to the hotel quickly!

Google Maps

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

We've created custom Google maps for our group, so if you don't already have this on your phone, you really should add it!

CityMapper

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

This app bills itself as the “ultimate transport app” and it is incredibly useful for navigating cities. Once you've downloaded it, make sure your phone's location services are turned on to ensure accurate navigation and real-time transit info. Note: includes ads.

Transport for London—TfL Go

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

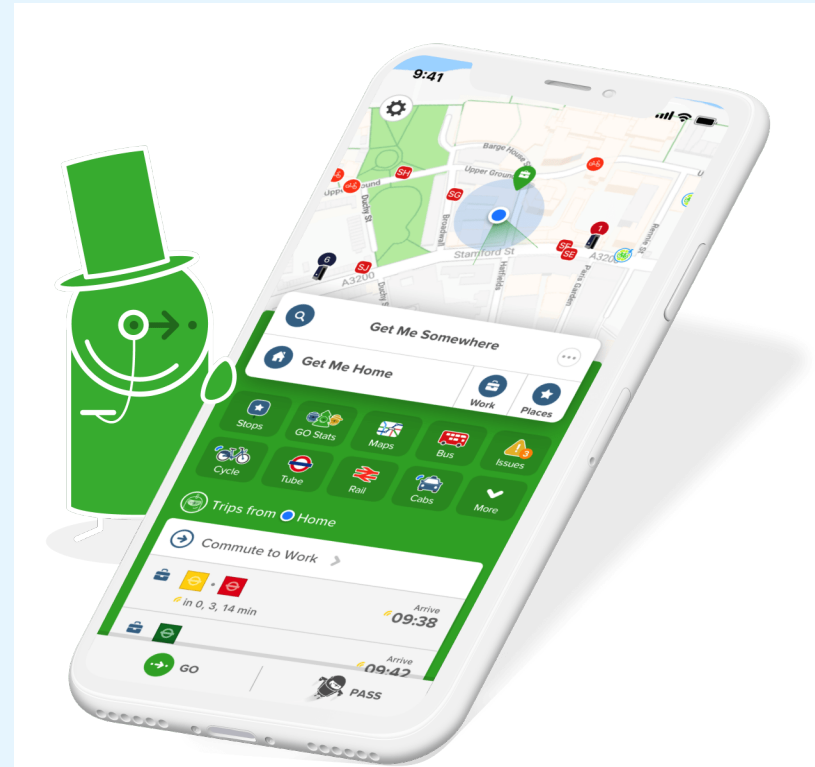
The official app from the city's transportation administration agency, with live Tube map, bus arrivals, etc.

Tube Map and Bus Times

These two third-party apps from the same developer are popular downloads, with access even when deep in the Underground, or away from wifi. Note: includes ads.

Tube Map — [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)

London Bus Times — [iPhone](#) and [Android](#)



National Rail

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

If you plan to travel via train outside of London—real-time train tables, purchase tickets, etc.

Taxis & Car Services

If those dinner reservations you booked are across town, the front desk or concierge at the hotel can book a car, or the doorman can hail a taxi, but if you're out and about and just want to "not deal" with public transportation, try:

Uber

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

If you've never used this app, it's very simple to set up and install, and works in almost every major city in the world.

Bolt

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

An Uber alternative that is extremely popular in Europe. You may often have better luck using Bolt than Uber.



FreeNow

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

There's no Lyft in London, but the same company owns this taxi-booking service.

Gett

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Another London-based option for black cab bookings.

Addison Lee

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

A London-based premium car service app.

Black Lane

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

This is an international limo service, just in case you really want to travel in style.

Thames Clippers

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

If you want to explore London from the river... a hop-on/hop-off option for the city's "river bus".

London: Dining in Style

Not only is London a culinary potluck, thanks to the British Empire, but also restaurant design is *flourishing* in London. Great food, beautiful interiors...what more could you ask for?



If the options for choosing some restaurants seem overwhelming, we have a couple pieces of advice:

1) If you are determined to get into a specific restaurant, start your research now! Some hot spots open up reservations only a month in advance, on specific days/times.

2) If you don't know yet where you'd like to try, start researching by key words. Do you want a rooftop view over London? Outdoor dining, but NOT on a sidewalk? A chef's table experience? Instagramable interiors? The best Tamil food in London?

Once you have some plans, take advantage of our hotel's concierge service. [Email them](#) your info and requests and ask them to try to score rezgies for you. That's what they're there for and you can tip they've booked and you've landed.

For apps, we suggest downloading both The Fork and the Open Table. Some London restaurants use these apps to manage their bookings, vs. Resy or similar apps in the U.S, but they can also help search by type, location, etc.

The Fork [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Open Table [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Because the London dining scene is ever-changing, if you want to know the latest, trending restaurant in the city, this is the app for you.

Hot Dinners [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

After a long day, sometimes you just want an early dinner and then your bed! This app rewards early diners with 50% your meal if you book the first seating of the night, although there is a booking fee.

First Table [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

This app includes dining, shopping, and also offers for exclusive experiences, reduced entrance fees to certain events and attractions, and much more info you might find helpful as a tourist.

Fox & Muse [iPhone](#) [Android](#)





Tourism & Events

If you're planning to visit specific museums, go the theatre or a show, or explore London outside of our schedule, these will come in handy!

TodayTix

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

London's famed West End has all the blockbuster musicals you could wish for, and there's also the spring season of new non-musical shows that will still be running, including Cynthia Erivo starring in a one-woman

Dracula; a controversial but highly-reviewed new version of *Romeo & Juliet*; a surprisingly take on the execution of Anne Boleyn; and a chance to experience two theatrical powerhouses—Ralph Fiennes in David Hare's new play *Grace Pervades*.

It's also worth checking out the following websites:

[Official London Theatre](#) which is just what it sounds like... and this organization also runs the Leicester Square walk-up, same-day ticket booth. This was formerly known as the Tkts booth, if you're familiar with that from NYC.

[Stage Door](#)
[London Theatre](#)
[Love Theatre](#)
[Box Office](#)

Note: If you know what show you want to see, it's often worth contacting the theatre directly to see what's available. The West End "Tkts" booth and the individual theatres are only about a 20 minute walk up Picadilly from our hotel.

Visit London

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

This is the official City of London tourist app which offers several different [Passes](#) with discounted and skip-the-line access to key locations.

Tickets

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Another popular choice for skip-the-line tickets is a third party app that can also travel with you later, to many different cities.

Fever

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Another option is Fever, although some recent reviews have noted frustrating purchase transactions and other issues. But there are plenty of free events listed as well.

Time Out London

And, while Time Out no longer offers a London app, the [London website](#) is filled with up-to-date info on art, dining, etc. There are features on the [best rooftop restaurants](#) in London, [unmissable immersive theatre experiences](#) (including those from [The Lost Estate](#)), and much more.

Museum Experience Upgrades

Smartify

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Bloomberg Connects

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Once in a museum, these two apps can help add an extra dimension to your experience. Bonus: They work in more cities than just London.

Note: Not all museums in any given city are included.

Incredibly Useful to Somewhat Quirky

Every city has its own unique stories, these apps allow you to discover them.

BBC Weather

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Want local weather? Get it from the local experts!

Blue Plaques

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Walking through London you'll eventually see buildings marked with the (usually) round Blue Plaque. These mark places, both ordinary and exceptional, where notable people lived or worked. The first Blue Plaque was created in



1866 and is considered to be the first ever type of organized commemoration scheme in the world. The program is now run by the non-profit English Heritage organization.

Voice Map

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

GPS-triggered audio tours, that can be used off-line, in museums, or throughout in the city. Very highly rated. Just make sure your earphones are working and you leave one ear open when out in the city!

Trail Tale

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Another self-guided tour app that allows you to learn more about London as you explore.

The Nudge

[iPhone](#) [Android](#)

A slightly different take on a tourist app, this is more like a well-informed friend who texts you interesting places to see and explore.

London Architecture Guide

[iPhone](#)

Want to know what that building is? When it was built? What it's currently used for? This app, created by the Architecture Foundation, is perfect for those questions. Sorry, no Android version offered.

London is an amazing city for exploring architecture... nearly 1,000 years of buildings (there's part of a Roman wall still in the city) standing in, around, over, and beside each other.



No one app can cover all that information, so following are some of our favorite stories and posts on London architectural finds, each with their own perspective.

[20 Iconic Buildings](#)

[50 Best Buildings in London](#)

[Heritage & Contemporary Highlights](#)

[Centuries of London Architecture](#)

[Great Architectural Photo Spots](#)

[Old vs New](#)

[London Architectural Landmarks](#)



Finally, the quirky (but still useful) apps...

Toilets 4 London [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

and

Flush [iPhone](#) [Android](#)

Because when you gotta go, you gotta know.