

LONDON

Basic facts/ Tell me some facts about London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom. It is one of the biggest cities in Europe. About 9 million people live there.

It is a multicultural [maltikalč-ri] city, with over 300 different languages spoken.

The Queen/ Elizabeth II (the second) lives and works there, in Buckingham palace.

Geography/ Where is London?

London is located in southern England.

Britain is made up of England in the south,

Scotland in the north and Wales [weils] in the west.

The river Thames [temz] flows between North and South London.

The History

The first people who came to Britain were the Romans in the year 43. They built roads, buildings and created the town. They named it Londinium.

After them Anglo-Saxon warriors came to England and stayed from 5th to 11th century, their language was similar to German language. The Vikings [ai] raided (dělat nájezdy) and invaded England from the north several times, too. The most famous was William the Conqueror [kon-k-r@r] who won in the battle of Hastings in 1066 and became King of England.

In 1666 the Great Fire of London burnt the town down. Many parts of London were destroyed completely. We can see it in paintings, a lot of writers wrote about it.



The national symbols of London & Great Britain

The national symbols of Britain and London are the British flag called Union Jack, the red double decker buses, black taxi cars called Black cabs, Royal guardsmen by Buckingham Palace, with black hats called Bearskin (the officers' hats are made of brown Canadian bear skin/fur [f'] as the brown bear's fur is thicker. They dye it black =barví na černo), other symbols

are the British red post boxes, red phone boxes or the national anthem called God save the Queen.

Famous buildings and monuments/ What famous sights can you see?

If you go to London, you should take a photo of Big Ben (it is only a nick name of the bell inside the Elizabethan clock tower, people think it is the tower) and the Houses of Parliament (also known as Westminster Palace with gothic church Westminster Abbey [ebi]), Buckingham Palace (the official residence of the Queen), The British Museum where you can see artefacts from all over the world, The National Gallery (with the world's most famous paintings by Van Gogh, a self-portrait by Rembrandt, and others), The Tower of London which used to be a prison and where you can see the Crown Jewels, or The Tower Bridge (that opens in the middle). Tourists like St (saint) Paul's Cathedral,

Entertainment/ What can you do in London?

You can do a lot of touristic activities: see the Sea Life London Aquarium, Wembley Stadium, go on the London Eye, walk along the River Thames. You should visit Buckingham Palace, see the Changing of the Guards, visit museums and sights, for example Madame Tussaud [tuzó] museum, a museum of wax figurines. Tourists love shopping in Oxford Street, Camden Market or at Covent Garden in London. There are many markets where you can buy fruit and vegetables, exotic foods, interesting clothes or just enjoy the atmosphere. London is famous for its parks, such as Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Green Park on one side of Buckingham Palace, St James's Park on the other side, with large lake and a lot of ducks and birds, Greenwich Park (with a famous observatory and planetarium) and Kensington Gardens.

Covent Garden

In the 17th century Covent Garden was the biggest and most important flower, fruit and vegetable market in Britain. There were illegal boxing matches there and it wasn't safe to drink water there, it was not healthy. People drank beer or gin after work, it was a dangerous place. In Covent Garden there is the oldest restaurant in London, it has been open since 1798. Today there are many shops and boutiques, they are very expensive, you can have a cup of coffee [kofi] in the local cafés [kafés] (kavárny), or watch buskers (that are street artists, street performers).



Public transport

London has famous red double decker buses, taxi cars called black cabs, you can travel by the Underground called the tube (there are over 270 stations on the tube!), or from London you can take a train. The Eurostar goes from St Pancras Station through a tunnel under the English Channel to Paris and to Europe.

Buckingham Palace

Buckingham Palace is a place where the Queen lives and works. It is like a small town, there is a hospital, police station, cinema, sports centre and other things in it. King George III bought the building for his wife Queen Charlotte in the 18th century, in 1761. It is open to visitors every summer. There are about 800 rooms - 19 State rooms, 52 Royal and guest bedrooms, 188 staff bedrooms, 92 offices and 78 bathrooms. Tourists can see some parts of the Palace, visit some rooms, it's like a chateau [šató](zámek). You can also get married there/ have a wedding in the Palace.



In front of Buckingham Palace there's a statue of Queen Victoria.

The Queen

Queen Elizabeth II was born in 1926. She is 92 years old. She is the Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries – such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Pakistan and Ceylon. Queen Elizabeth II took the throne at crazy times after her father King George VI died aged 56 in 1952. At that time, she was only 25 years old!!



(Imagine at the age of 25 the responsibility of running a country, or more likely four!!! The Queen did not expect to become the Queen. Her uncle, Prince Edward inherited the throne, but when Elizabeth was 10, he abdicated to marry a divorced lover, an American celebrity.)



The Royal Family

The Queen is married to Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh, he is 96 years old. The Queen has 4 children, Prince Charles, Prince Andrew, Prince Edward and Princess Anne. Prince Charles has been married twice, to Princess Diana, who died in a car crash in 1997, they had two children, Prince William and Prince Harry, and to Camilla Bowles.

Questions to Britain and London/ Otázky k Británii & Londýnu

1. Tell me some basic information about London
2. What do you know about Buckingham Palace?
3. What do you know about the Queen and her family?
4. What sights can you see in London?
5. How do people travel in London?
6. Where does London lie?/ geography
7. What do you know about the history of the town?
8. What can you do in London?
9. What is Covent Garden?
10. **Would you like to visit London in the future? Why?/ Why not?**
11. **Have you ever been to London? – Yes, I have. I saw.. We visited.. I really liked.../ No, I haven't.**

