

# BRITISH 10K LONDON RUN *A Race Route Rich In History*

The Official British 10K London Run takes a course through some of London's best known and most historic streets

The city of London dates back to the 1st century AD, when the Romans established Londinium as a civilian town. Its evolution into the sprawling city of today has seen many changes, and the city's rich history is written in its streets.

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Piccadilly is believed to be named after Piccadils, the stiff collars with a lace or perforated border, that were the source of wealth for a tailor named Robert Baker, who sold them in the late 16th and early 17th century from his shop on the Strand. With his fortune he bought a substantial plot of land to the west of what was then London and proceeded to build himself a large house there. This soon became known as Piccadilly Hall.

After the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, Piccadilly and the area to the north now known as Mayfair were developed as a fashionable residential locale. 10K runners begin their race heading east on Piccadilly.

Runners then pass down St James Street, which heads south toward St James Palace. This Palace was commissioned by Henry VIII and became the administrative centre of the monarchy - a role it maintains today. St James Street plays host to some of London's best known gentlemen's clubs.

The race proceeds down Pall Mall, whose name derives from a ball and mallet game that was played there in the 17th century. The name pall mall, or palle maille, referred not only to the game but the mallet used and the alley it was played in. Many cities have streets that evolved from pall mall gaming alleys and the American name for shopping areas is also derived from this. Pall Mall is also host to many gentlemen's clubs.

Runners then proceed into Cockspur Street and through Trafalgar Square (pictured right), home to the famous Nelson's Column, erected between 1840 and 1843 to commemorate Nelson's death at the battle of Trafalgar. The square itself was created by the architect Charles Barry, who is best known for his role in rebuilding the Palace Of Westminster.

From there the course takes runners down Northumberland Avenue, named after the Dukes of Northumberland, the Percy family, who lived there in the Jacobean Northumberland House, demolished in 1866 to make way for the Avenue. A left turn onto Victoria Embankment, built between 1865 and 1870, takes runners toward the City of London along the edge of the Thames.

The course then travels along Upper Thames Street, doing a U-turn before Southwark Bridge and back to Castle Baynard Street, which was once the site of Baynard's Castle, believed to have been built by the Norman landowner Ralph Baynard and famous for its role in William Shakespeare's 'Richard III'. The castle remained in its strategic position on the bank of the Thames until the Great Fire Of London in 1666.

The race continues up Puddle Dock, once one of London's docks and now home to the Mermaid Theatre, and follows Queen Victoria Street to turn onto White Lion Hill.

This leads back down onto Victoria Embankment heading west towards Westminster Bridge. The bridge has gothic detailing by Charles Barry, who was also the architect responsible for the present Palace Of Westminster, built between 1834 and 1864 after fire destroyed the previous building.

The runners cross the bridge then turn and cross back under the shadow of the clock tower of the Palace of Westminster, better known as the Houses Of Parliament. The tower houses world's largest four-faced chiming clock and the bell Big Ben, a name which is often mistakenly given to the clock!

The runners then turn back along Victoria Embankment and head to Horse Guards Avenue, which leads onto the final stretch along Whitehall.

Runners pass the country's principal war memorial, the Cenotaph and the Ministry Of Defence before finishing just past Downing Street, official residence to the British Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer for over two hundred years.

