



# LONDON HOLIDAY

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

*From theatre and shopping to skating, walking and river cruising, winter in the capital city brings out charms both indoors and outside.*

**BY TIFFANY THORNTON**

***“Anything can happen, if you let it.”***

***—Mary Poppins***

When one thinks of London images of Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and red double-decker buses come to mind. Yet masquerading behind the obvious is a city of whimsical magic, especially during the holiday season. The timeless city of London is where literary greats drew inspiration for classic tales for all ages.

Paddington Bear began his journey at Paddington Station in London. Mary Poppins traipsed through the city, kids and magic in tow. Even Peter Pan took flight above the streets of London on his way to Neverland. Yet perhaps it is Charles Dickens' tale of Ebenezer Scrooge's road to redemption in *A Christmas Carol* that many most fondly remember.

### **DICKENS FOR ALL**

The Dickens museum with its Georgian inspired exterior was home to the author in the 1800s. This famed spot is where *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*

unfolded into classic novels. You can tour the home by candlelight, or partake in one of the costumed tours. The museum even offers a “Little Dickens” program for youngsters throughout the week.

What better way to experience the holidays in London than with a theatre production? London is indeed a culture of theatre filled with an abundance of talent. This winter acting legend Jim Broadbent plays Mr. Scrooge on stage in *A Christmas Carol* at the historic Noel Coward Theatre from Nov 30th to Jan 30th, 2016.

**Above:** The Burlington Arcade



## WINTER GARDENS

Meander through Kensington Gardens (once the gardens of royalty) to the Peter Pan statue, commissioned by author J.M. Barrie himself. The whimsical statue was built in the gardens at that special spot that cultivated much of Barrie's ingenuity.

Twinkling lights abound in enchanting Kew Gardens. A mile-long illuminated path weaves through one of the world's most famous botanical gardens. Each step evokes a fairy-like land after dark, filled with a scented fire garden and a choir of holly bushes. Indulge in the mulled wine cider to stay toasty.

## ICE AND WATER

Ice skating on London's favourite rink in the lovely Somerset House courtyard is a must-do. With the large Christmas tree as the backdrop and the grand historic buildings on either side of the rink, it

certainly leaves an impression. Pop into The Skate lounge for some yummy treats. For something a little more decadent after a skate, Fortnum's Lodge is the perfect place to dine with family and friends. The lodge is renowned for its Welsh rarebit and popular "chocolossus" hot chocolate. Perfect on a wintery day!

Cruise down England's longest river, the Thames, past festive lights. City Cruises has an array of holiday choices for the family, from Carols on the Thames to Teatime with a Christmas Twist. Indulge in the scrumptious traditional mince pies and sip on mulled wine.

## SHOPPING WITH SANTA

Harrods has been synonymous with class since the 1800s. Boasting over 330 departments, Europe's largest department store is a shopper's dream. Lit by more than 12,000 light bulbs, at night it takes centre stage on the

streets of London. It's the perfect place to spend hours picking up London-inspired souvenirs and taking the little ones to visit Santa at Harrods' famous Christmas Grotto where they can explore Santa's toy workshop and take home a little gift. 🎁

## GETTING THERE

*London, England*

Fly to London's Heathrow airport throughout the year.

**Above:** Winter in the city: Shops on Oxford Street.