

FEATURE

LONDON

From Harry Potter to Buckingham Palace, London has lots to offer

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LONDON – London, always the centre of Jewish life, is the oldest place of Jewish settlement in England.

There are more than 260,000 Jews in England and Wales. Visit Jewish London (www.visitjewishlondon.com) is your “go to” site to get a pulse on what is going on here. It provides information about Jewish sites, services and events going on around the UK. There are listings of synagogues of all denominations, kosher or Jewish-style restaurants and accommodation, places of Jewish cultural interest and listings of events hosted by these various places and organizations. Check out the London Jewish Museum of Art, the London Jewish Mu-

seum, the Jewish Military Museum and the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC).

Here are the Top 10 things to do in London:

10 Stay somewhere central and close to a tube (subway) station. The Kensington Hotel (www.doylecollection.com) at the corner of Queen's Gate and the Old Brompton Road is part of the Doyle Collection, a privately owned group of eight luxury hotels. This includes two others in London. The hotel welcomes many Jewish guests. Upon request they are able to cater for any dietary requirements. The closest synagogue (Westminster Synagogue) is a stop away at Knightsbridge on the Piccadilly Tube Line

9 While in London consider



The historic gates of Buckingham Palace. (Photo: Andrew Holt).

the Warner Brothers Studio Tour – the Harry Potter experience (<http://www.wbstudio-tour.co.uk>). Set adjacent to the working film studios where all eight Harry Potter films were made in the town of Leavesden, the studio tour offers vis-

itors the unique opportunity to explore two soundstages and a back lot filled with original sets, animatronic creatures and breathtaking special effects.

8 The Original Tour

(<http://www.theoriginaltour.com>) hop on, hop off bus allows you to sit back, relax and take in the sights, sounds and iconic views of the city, both ancient and modern. One fantastic value 24-hour ticket offers a truly comprehensive London sightseeing experience: on foot, by boat and on board a marvellous fleet of London's famous red buses. This was probably one of the most relaxing experiences for me.

7 While the bus tour was fun, we enjoyed doing the same thing by boat as well. City Cruises (www.citycruises.com) is not the leading operator of passenger services on the River Thames for nothing, carrying more than two million passengers annually on its extensive sightseeing, entertainment and charter services.

6 The London Eye (www.londoneye.com) has become as synonymous with London as the Eiffel Tower in Paris since its debut in 2000. The view from this giant ferris wheel structure is astonishing once you get up really high.

5 When in London, I was always told, one must experience afternoon tea. We chose to do so at the gorgeous Dorchester Hotel (www.dorchestercollection.com) in the

stunning vista of The Promenade, which stretches the same length as the London landmark, Nelson's Column. For more than 80 years the Dorchester has earned the reputation of serving one of the finest afternoon tea experiences in the country: home-made finger sandwiches, raisin and plain scones, a selection of French pastries, and of course, a wide array of tea choices.

4 Every year Westminster Abbey (<http://www.westminster-abbey.org>) welcomes more than a million visitors who want to explore this 700-year-old building. Once inside audio guides are available in eight languages or there is the highly-popular verger-led tour. There was a long lineup when we arrived, but very much worth the wait. Indeed this was another one of those living history lessons.

3 The Tower of London (<http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon>) is a large open air site covering 18 acres (including the moat). As well as being a unique historical monument, it also houses part of the collection of the Royal Armouries.

2 London is the home to extraordinary live musical theatre, rivalling Broadway. With our schedule we had little time to spare and we selected Matilda the Musical (www.matildathemusical.com) playing at The Cambridge Theatre at Earlham St. It opened in October 2011 and is booked until May 2015. There is a wide array of productions to choose from.

1 The Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace can be accompanied with a tour of the latter facility from late July through September. It is an extraordinary place to walk through.

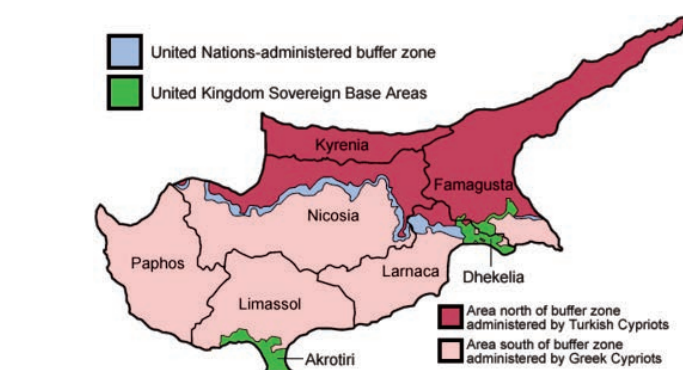
Israeli FM Lieberman affirms right of Cyprus to explore for oil and gas

(JNS.org) – Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman affirmed the right of Cyprus to explore for oil and gas around its shores after meeting with the Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides.

"We think it's crucial to respect all international norms and obligations and to act according to acceptable rules in the international community," Lieberman said.

It is "extremely unnecessary" to create more tension in the Middle East, he added in reference to Turkey's refusal to recognize the divided Cyprus as sovereign and its opposition to Cypriot gas searching.

Cyprus has been split into Greek and Turkish sides since 1974. Turkey recognizes only Cyprus's Turkish declaration of



Cyprus has been split into a Greek and Turkish side since 1974. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

independence, and the country still maintains troops on the island's north side. The United Nations is facilitating reunification talks between the island's two sides, but these talks were

suspended last month by Cyprus's Greek president, Nicos Anastasiades, when Turkey carried out a mineral search in Cypriot waters.

Israel also has strained relations

with Turkey, and the Jewish state is looking to achieve “tangible results next year” regarding cooperation on gas exploration with Cyprus, Lieberman said, according to Yedioth Ahronoth.

ADL names special assistant to Obama as its new national director

(JNS.org) – The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) appointed last Thursday White House aide and social entrepreneur Jonathan Greenblatt to succeed Abraham Foxman as its national director next summer.

The announcement marks the culmination of a search that began in February, when

Foxman said he would step down in July 2015. Foxman, 74, has worked for ADL since 1965 and in 1987 was named national director, a role in which he has become one of the highest-profile American Jewish organizational leaders.

Greenblatt, a 43-year-old grandson of a Holocaust sur-

vivor, is Special Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation in the Domestic Policy Council for the Obama administration. He was previously a social entrepreneur who co-founded Ethos Brands, which produced Ethos Water, a premium bot-

tlled water that donated a portion of its profits to global clean water programs. Greenblatt also interned for ADL's New England Regional Office while an undergraduate student at Tufts University.

"I welcome the successful completion of the search process and the committee's

choice of my successor, Jonathan Greenblatt," Foxman said. "I'm confident that ADL will continue to thrive and grow under Jonathan's leadership and I look forward to working with him to ensure a successful and smooth transition."

Greenblatt said, "Since its in-

ception, ADL has had a tremendous impact on making America a more inclusive society for all people, while defending the rights of Jews to freely practise their faith and be full participants in society. I am incredibly excited by the opportunity of building on those great successes."