



London Paddington

The bustling transport hub has plenty of options for eating, drinking and exploring

1 GRAND UNION CANAL

Exit Paddington station via South Wharf Road and turn left into the cobbled pedestrianised street that runs alongside St Mary's hospital. Follow the sign to the right for Paddington Basin and snake around the building until you reach the Grand Union Canal. Stretching 220km from London to Birmingham, it was once a major artery for bringing goods and freight to the capital from the Midlands and the North. Today, Paddington remains an important transport hub, as the London terminus of GWR and a future Crossrail station – but it has also invested in a cultural future. More than £1 billion has been spent on regenerating the neighbourhood, transforming the

banks of the canal into a lively area buzzing with restaurants, bars and community spaces, while its waterways have become tourist attractions. Head to the year-round Floating Pocket Park at Merchant Square – overlooked by glass and steel buildings, this lush green space was created by garden designer Tony Woods and offers respite from the industrial architecture, its series of lawns connected by decked platforms and walkways, with plenty of bench seating amidst floral planters.

2 GO BOAT

Take a break from London's Tube and rail rides and instead cruise down the canal in one of Go Boat's electric self-drive vessels. Starting at the

pontoon at Merchant Square, you'll be able to visit the likes of Regent's Park and Camden Lock with up to eight people (depending on current government "bubble" guidance). Fret not, you won't need any captain experience as a member of the crew will run through the controls before you set off. On your travels you'll pass the Thomas Heatherwick-designed Rolling Bridge on your right, an octagonal structure that unfurls across the towpath every Wednesday and Friday at noon, and on Saturdays at 2pm. From £79 for one hour; online booking only. goboot.co.uk

3 LITTLE VENICE

Once you've safely returned the boat in one piece, turn right into

DARREN CURZON/MARTIN LEITCH/VICTORHUANG/ISTOCK; PASCO PHOTOGRAPHY
Hermitage Street and continue through a tunnel under the Westway, stopping to appreciate ceramicist Robert Dawson's wall mural. The blue-hued tiles pay homage to the area, featuring a pattern based on the Crossrail logo and a portrait of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the engineer behind the network of tunnels, bridges and viaducts for the Great Western Railway. Turn left down St Mary's Terrace until you reach Maida Avenue. You're now in the heart of Little Venice, one of London's most coveted residential areas, famed for its Regency white stucco villas and quaint houseboats along Regent's Canal. Walk left and cross over to the peaceful Rembrandt Gardens for leafy views of the waterways and narrowboats.



4 DARCIE AND MAY GREEN

Now that you've worked up an appetite, head back to the Paddington arm of the canal to experience one of its many eateries. Highlights include Darcie and May Green, an Antipodean restaurant housed in a barge on the canal. This floating hangout could easily be mistaken for an art installation, with its colourful façade designed by Sir Peter Blake – of the Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album cover fame – and its 50 metre-long upper deck is a prime spot for canal-watching. Another option is London Shell Co, which runs seafood cruises aboard the Prince Regent, offering set menus for lunch and dinner. If you're prone to seasickness, its

neighbouring sister restaurant, the Grand Duchess, is safely moored on land. daisyggreenfood.com; londonshellco.com

5 PERGOLA PADDINGTON

End your fleeting visit with a well-deserved aperitif. From Darcie and May Green and London Shell Co, take a left turn into Sheldon Square and then continue on to Kingdom Street until you reach Pergola Paddington. This picturesque, partially open-air food court is set over two floors and is clad in a leafy canopy of flowers and fairy lights. It has four self-service street-food vendors that change seasonally, plus two bars, daybeds for lounging, and weekend DJ sets. pergolapaddington.com

