

The British
Museum

The little book
of big ideas



Welcome

Thank you for becoming a Member of the British Museum Friends. Your donation helps support the work of the Museum and preserve the collection for future generations. As a Member, we want you to have the best experience of the Museum and to get closer to the collection – this guide will help you do just that.

Contents

- 4** Membership benefits
- 6** Visiting the Museum
- 8** Itineraries and tours
- 16** Eat, drink, relax
- 18** Delve deeper
- 22** Membership FAQs

Membership benefits

Enjoy a range of benefits as a Member and get the most out of the Museum and the collection.



Stoneware figure of Budai Hesheng
by Liu Zhen (according to inscription),
China, 1486.

Free entry to exhibitions

Members enjoy free, unlimited access to special exhibitions. For news on upcoming shows, visit britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-events

Exclusive events

Discover more about the collection, special exhibitions and ground-breaking research with our events programme. Featuring:

- Early and late exhibition openings so you can visit shows outside normal opening hours
- Lectures from world-class experts on a huge range of topics
- Behind-the-scenes tours offering the chance to discover more about Museum departments and exhibitions
- Unique experiences in the stunning Great Court, including film screenings and musical performances

Magazine and digital archive

Stay up to date with the latest research and object acquisitions with the *British Museum Magazine*, delivered to your door three times a year. You'll also have access to the *British Museum Magazine* digital archive.

Members' Room

Relax in the Members' Room which offers magnificent views over the Great Court and a relaxing space to enjoy a coffee or light lunch – for Members only. For opening times, visit britishmuseum.org/membership/members-room

Exclusive content

Members can access content from Museum curators and experts through regular emails and on dedicated Membership webpages.

Discounts in the Museum's shops and restaurants

Members enjoy 10% off in the Museum's shops, cafés and restaurants, including the online shop.

Visiting the Museum

Before you come

Do visit the website before visiting to see which exhibitions and free displays are available and to check opening times (including information about any gallery closures).

Travelling by public transport? Why not download one of our Membership podcasts to listen to on the way here. You'll get insights from curators and other experts on our exhibitions and other fascinating topics. Or you can read one of our blogs on everything from the decoding of the Rosetta Stone, to the conservation of a Māori cloak and exhibitions past and present.

Prefer videos? Visit the British Museum's YouTube channel for virtual exhibition tours, the Curators' Corner series and a behind-the-scenes look at the work of our scientific research and conservation teams.

When you arrive

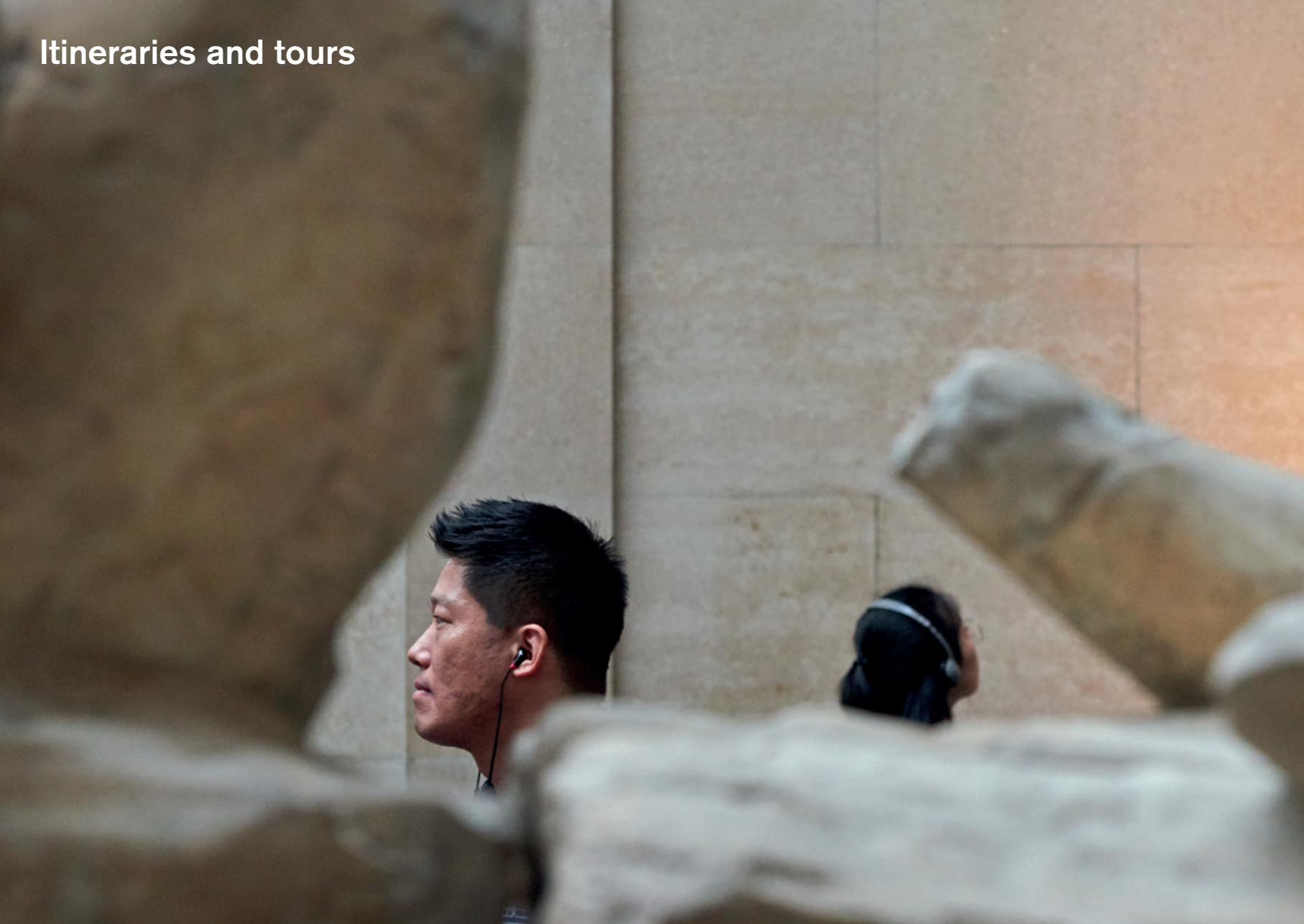
Drop off any coats or small bags at the cloakroom, located by the Main entrance. This is free for Members to use, although its use is subject to demand. Don't forget to double check the website for the Museum's luggage policy.

If you have any questions when you arrive, there is a dedicated Membership Desk in the Great Court where you can talk to our friendly team or pick up a temporary Membership card if you've lost yours. You can also book Membership events here and upgrade your Membership.

Finally, there is the Guide Desk in the Great Court, where you can download the Museum's Audio app and buy earbuds.. If you are new to the Museum, this is a great place to start and get more information about the Museum and collection as you go round.



Itineraries and tours



Itineraries and tours

One
hour

Only have an hour?
We recommend
choosing one gallery
to visit or joining one
of the popular eye-
opener tours available
daily. You can find more
information about the
eye-opener tours at
[britishmuseum.org/
visit/tours-and-talks](https://britishmuseum.org/visit/tours-and-talks)
or visit the Information
Desk on-site.

**Top tip: visit one of our
quieter galleries to
really to soak up the
objects and artwork.
Here are five gallery
suggestions that offer
fascinating insights
into world history.**



1

**Americas:
North America and Mexico**
Rooms 26 and 27

Explore the cultural identities
of Native North Americans from
ancient times to the present, as
well as the distinctive regional
cultures that flourished in what
is now Mexico, from around
2000 BC until the conquest of the
Aztec Empire by Spain in 1521.

Nasca vessel, 600–100 BC. Found in Peru.



2

Prints and drawings
Rooms 90 and 90a

One lesser-known fact about the
British Museum is that it houses
one of the largest collections of
prints and drawings in Europe.
As they can't all be on display,
the works on show are changed
regularly so it's always worth
going to see what's on.

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson
(1889–1946), *A Dawn, 1914*. Drypoint print, 1916.



3

Japan
Rooms 92–94
*The Mitsubishi Corporation
Galleries*

Walk through the expansive
history and culture of Japan in
these beautiful galleries. Discover
how continuity and change have
shaped Japan's past and present,
and the country's relationships
with the rest of the world.

Hosono Hitomi (b. 1978). Bisque porcelain
bowl with 1,000 sprig-moulded leaves, 2013.

Itineraries and tours



4

Europe and Middle East 10,000–800 BC

Room 51
*The Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan
Al Nahyan Gallery*

Farming began in the Middle East about 12,000 years ago and arrived in Britain about 6,000 years ago. Discover the beginnings of farming and how it changed the course of history in this eye-opening gallery.

Painted pottery bowl, Iran, 4950–4250 BC.



5

Africa

Room 25
The Sainsbury Galleries

From metalwork and sculpture to stunning contemporary art, the Africa galleries' objects reveal the extraordinary cultural, artistic and historical diversity of the continent.

Appliqué tent-panel, Egypt, about 1920–28.



Itineraries and tours

Half day

If you are staying for a few hours, there are different ways to enjoy the collection and explore world cultures.

You could try picking a time period and see how different cultures lived across the world.

This can be a fun way to explore a cross-section of the Museum and a reminder that cultures rarely developed in isolation as world trade has been around since ancient times.

Example itinerary for AD 400–880

- Head to Room 41, *The Sir Paul and Lady Ruddock Gallery*, and see the Sutton Hoo collection for a glimpse of the high life in Britain at that time.
- The Museum is well known for its ancient Egyptian collection, but why not explore what came after in Room 66, Ethiopia and Coptic Egypt?
- *The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic world* (Rooms 42–43), covers a wide range of Islamic history. This is a great period to look at as it covers the start of the Islamic world.
- Discover what was happening in China at the same time in *The Sir Joseph Hotung Gallery of China and South Asia* (Room 33), and look out for highlights including the Tomb figures.

Whole day

Lucky enough to have a whole day to spare?

We recommend starting with a highlights tour.

Lasting an hour and a half, these guided tours give a great introduction to the Museum. You'll need to book – either on the website or on-site at the Information Desk. If you'd rather explore by yourself, try our three-hour highlights trail which covers some of the Museum's most famous objects. Simply search 'three hours trail' on the Museum's website.

Once you have enjoyed a good overview of the collection, it will probably be time for lunch. You have exclusive access to the Members' Room overlooking the Great Court, but there's a range of restaurants and cafés to choose from (and you enjoy 10% off as a Member).

Once refreshed, why not take some time to explore one of the Museum's special exhibitions or displays? There are often major exhibitions in Rooms 30 and 35, which Members can access for free. There is also a range of smaller temporary displays across the Museum offering insights into the collection. Depending on what's on show, these might be in:

- Prints and drawings (Rooms 90 and 90a)
- *The Asahi Shimbun Displays* (Room 3)

For details of what's on, check britishmuseum.org/exhibitions-events or visit the Information Desk in the Great Court.

Before you visit, make sure you check the website for gallery opening times and possible closures.

Eat, drink, relax

From a quick coffee to a three-course meal, there are lots of food and drink options at the Museum – and Members enjoy 10% off.*

Marianne Brandt (1893–1983),
silver and ebony teapot.
Germany, about 1925–29.

Members' Room

A haven away from the crowds, the Members' Room is the perfect setting to take time out over coffee or lunch and plan or reflect upon your visit. It boasts magnificent views of the Great Court's two-acre space (the largest covered square in Europe) and the famous glass roof, designed by Norman Foster. Located above *The Sainsbury Exhibitions Gallery* (Room 30), the Members' Room offers quick and easy access to our special exhibitions. Facilities include a café with comfortable seating, a study area and free wifi.

Public eateries

Members enjoy a 10% discount* in all eateries across the Museum. Visit britishmuseum.org/visit/food-and-drink to find our full list of options. From a light sandwich to a full meal, there's something to satisfy every appetite.

Present your Membership card when paying to redeem your 10% discount*.

*Excludes alcoholic drinks



Delve deeper

A lot goes on behind the scenes at the Museum, including conservation, research on the collection and excavations around the world. Learn more about this crucial work and discover some of the objects not on display.

Collection online

Get closer to the collection and immerse yourself in two million years of history with Collection online at britishmuseum.org/collection

Recently redeveloped, it is now simple to find exactly what you're looking for, by searching for key terms or filtering by subject area. It provides access to almost four and a half million objects with detailed information and photographs.

Study rooms

Each curatorial department has a study room that is open to the public by appointment. You can request to view any object not on display in the study room (if the item is stable enough to be shown). Find out everything you need to know about booking an appointment at britishmuseum.org/resources/study-rooms

Library and Archive

The Museum's rich history and unique research holdings – made up of more than 300,000 volumes – are accessible to the public through its library service. The Library and Archive reflect the historic strengths of the Museum's diverse curatorial departments, which are dedicated to excellence in the research of human cultures – past and present – across the globe.

- The library is open to the public but you must register before you visit
- To register, please email library@britishmuseum.org

To find out more about visiting the library, visit britishmuseum.org/resources/library-and-archive

Delve deeper

Research

British Museum research provides new information and perspectives on the objects in the collection and the people who made, used or collected them. This might be the result of scientific examination, archaeological excavation or discussions with communities and contemporary artists. You can find information on current work, as well as publications at britishmuseum.org/research

Behind the scenes

Members can access a wide range of exclusive content such as videos from our curators, conservators and researchers at britishmuseum.org/members-exclusive-content. We also offer behind-the-scenes tours in the World Conservation and Exhibition Centre (situated just behind the Museum). Here you can explore a range of conservation and research studios and see how Museum experts prepare objects for display and conduct research for exhibitions. Information on tours can be found online at britishmuseum.org/membership/members-events



Jin Xian Qiu toning repairs on a Ming dynasty silk painting, *Eight Immortals*, by Zhang Chong.

The Townley Discobolus sculpture in the X-ray imaging laboratory of the British Museum's World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre.



Membership FAQs

Can I lend my Membership card to a friend?

Only the named Member may use their Membership card. However, you can upgrade your Membership so that a friend or family member can visit with you.

Do I need to book exhibition tickets?

As a Member, you enjoy free entry and unlimited access to special exhibitions and do not need to book. Please note that during peak times, when these exhibitions are at their busiest (such as lunchtimes and weekends), you may be given a timed ticket when you arrive to guarantee entry at a later time on the same day.

What should I do if I forget or lose my Membership card?

Members need to show their cards for free entry to exhibitions. If you have lost or forgotten your card, you can get a temporary card from the Membership Desk in the Great Court. To order a replacement, just call or email the Membership team and they'll post it to you.

How do I renew my Membership?

You can renew or upgrade your Membership by visiting britishmuseum.org/membership, or you can call or email the Membership team who will be happy to help. If you pay by Direct Debit, your Membership will be automatically renewed each year (you will receive written notification in advance of your renewal).

How do I contact the Membership team?

For information or questions regarding your Membership, including how to upgrade or renew, please email friends@britishmuseum.org or call +44 (0)20 7323 8195.

For a full set of FAQs and the latest information on visiting the Museum as a Member, please visit britishmuseum.org/membership

Page 2

Photo © Nigel Young.

Page 7

Photo © Benedict Johnson.

The British Museum Friends is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee which exists to support the British Museum.

Registered charity number 1086080
Company registration number 04133346

The British Museum

Great Russell Street
London WC1B 3DG

© 2023 The Trustees of the British Museum

04/2023