



Welcome
to Southwark

‘Southwark: Isn’t it really far from central London and difficult to reach? Unfashionable? Unsafe? Uninteresting?’ If this mirrors your opinion, you’ve obviously been overseas since about 1981. So, welcome home. And welcome to Southwark, probably the UK’s most diverse location and, quite possibly, its funkiest. Stretching from the banks of the River Thames in SE1 to leafy Dulwich, this London borough is home to some of the best bars, restaurants, theatres and museums in the capital...



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'Its central location along with the fabulous mix of bars, restaurants and theatres are Southwark's main selling points,' says Tim Plumb, director of commercial letting agent DTZ. 'The borough is minutes from the City and a short, direct tube ride from the West End and Canary Wharf, while mainline services from Waterloo and London Bridge are close by.'

Southwark is also a major tourist destination: home to the Tate Modern (Britain's third top attraction with 3.9 million visits in 2003), the London Dungeon, the Globe Theatre, Borough Market and the Millennium Bridge to name but a few.

Recent regeneration projects have boosted the thriving arts and entertainment scene in Southwark. New bars and restaurants join already established haunts on a seemingly monthly basis, while the borough's theatres are attracting (as they have since Shakespearean times) significant media attention. The star studded backing of the Young Vic refurbishment – which is rebuilding its home on The Cut – has made countless headlines.

Alongside the cultural renaissance, Southwark has become a beacon for businesses. London mayor Ken Livingstone is perhaps its most famous

worker, but a host of new office developments are springing up (pages 28-31) and a clutch of new media companies and architects are helping SE1 steal Hoxton's funky crown.

With such a bright future ahead, it's important that Southwark's rich historical past isn't forgotten. 'Southwark covers the classical range of the city: every aspect of London is represented from Roman, Medieval, industrial and village through to modern office-development and housing estates,' says Paul Evans, director of regeneration at Southwark Council. As Liam Bond, development director at More London, puts it: 'Southwark is many places all in one. It encapsulates what London has always been about'.

Home to hundreds of different communities and cultural groups, Southwark is also one of, if not the most diverse place in the UK. 'Southwark is a real melting pot,' says councillor Richard Porter. 'Throughout the 1980s and 1990s a large West African community made the borough their home. At present we are seeing a lot of immigration from South America, particularly Colombians. It is no small praise to Southwark's residents that all of these groups co-exist in harmony.'

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