



Thames Path South Bank Section 2

Follow the Thames Path from Albert Bridge to Tower Bridge. Pass the iconic Battersea Power Station, Shakespeare's Globe & Tate Modern.

Distance 10 kilometers / 6.2 miles

Duration 3 hours and 30 minutes



Water feature



Great views



Refreshments



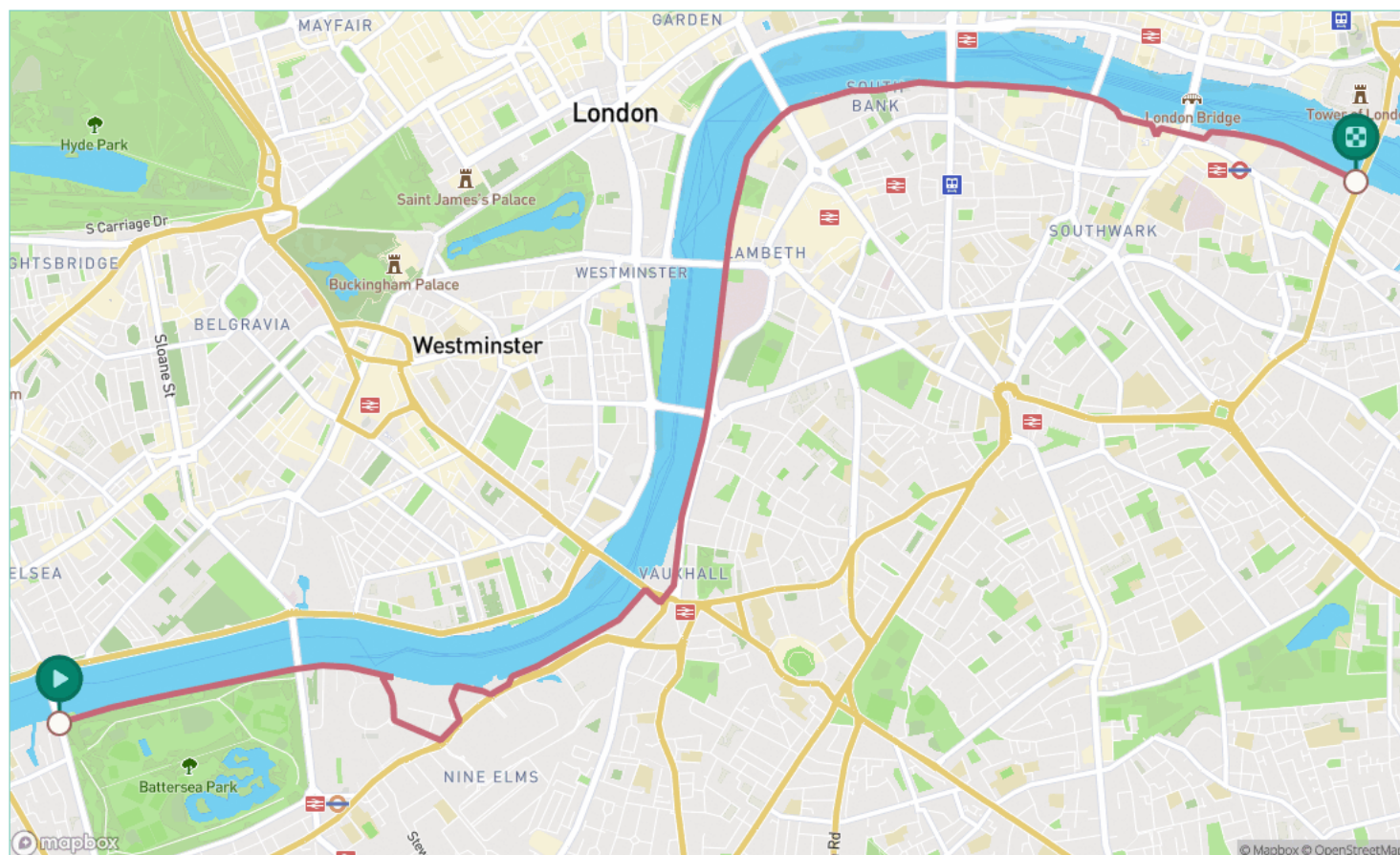
Public transport



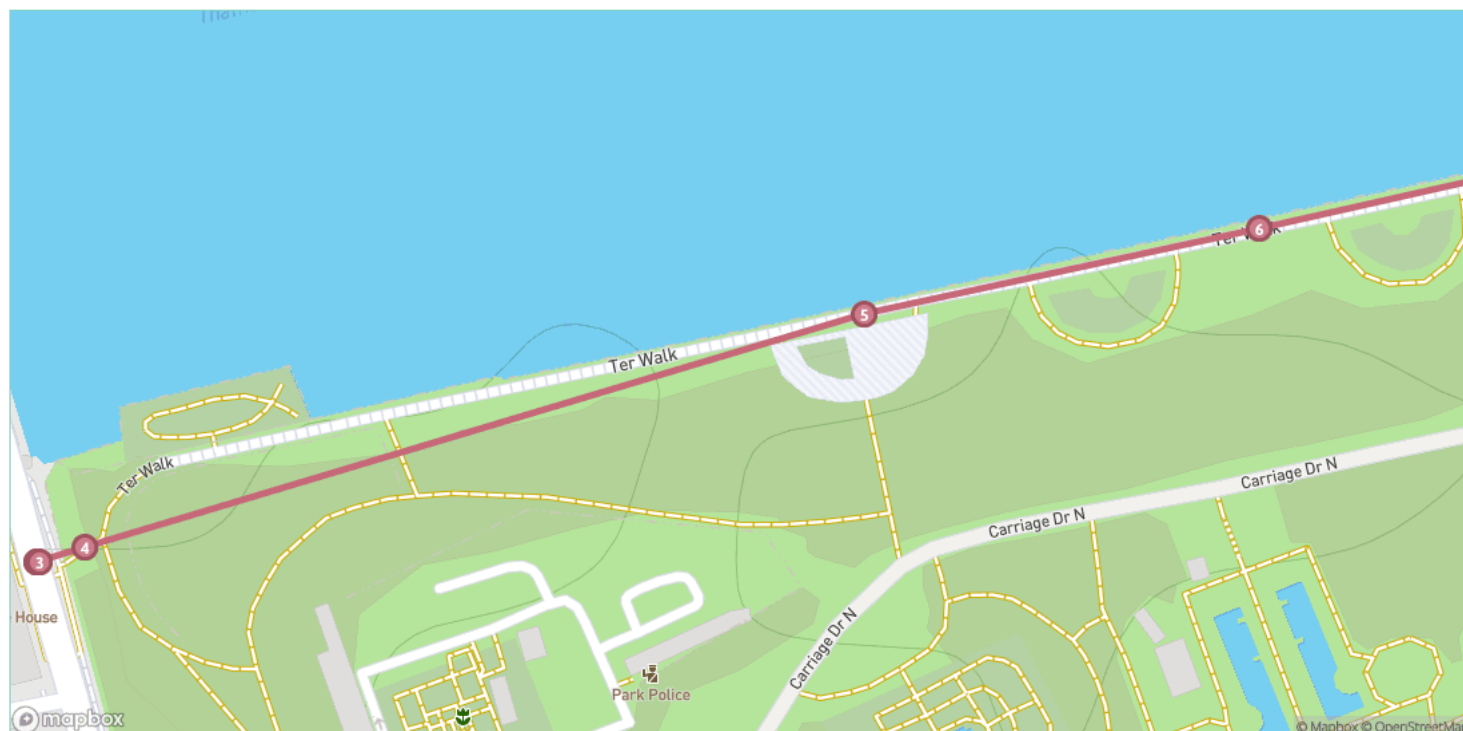
History



Dog friendly



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Step 1: Welcome to the Thames Path! This walk follows the south bank of the iconic Thames Path National Trail from Albert Bridge to Tower Bridge.

Step 2: This section begins at Albert Bridge. The closest train station is Battersea Park or Queenstown Road.

Step 3: Buses 156, 344 and 436 stop at Battersea Park station, if you're getting public transport to the start of this walk.

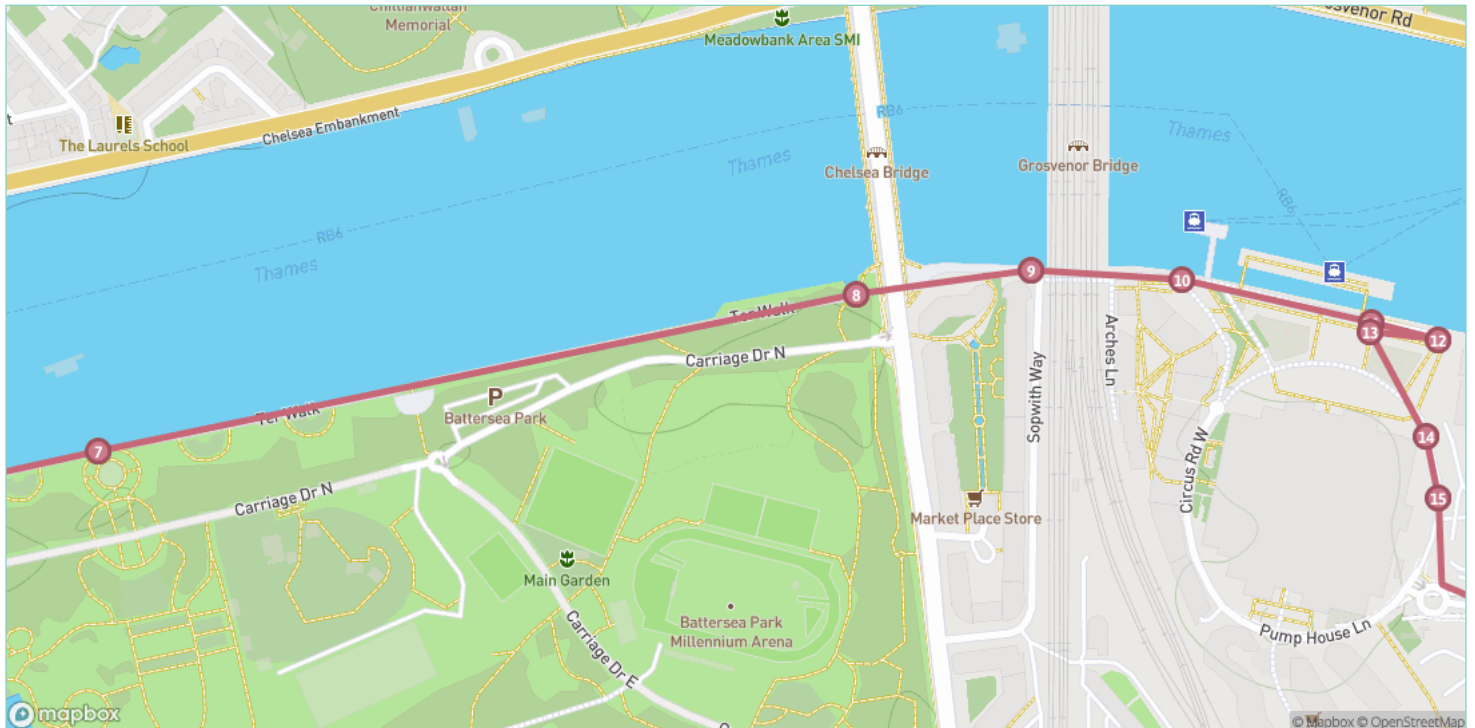
Step 4: From Albert Bridge, take a small pedestrian gate into Battersea Park and head towards the river, walking with the Thames on your left.

Step 5: Head along the riverside walkway and follow it straight along the river, with the park to your right.

Did you know?

During both wars, anti-aircraft guns and barrage balloons were installed to help protect London from enemy air raids. Shelters were dug and part of Battersea Park was turned over to allotments and a pig farm. After the Second World War, The Festival Pleasure Gardens for the Festival of Britain were designed here. Thirty-seven acres of the park were developed to form the Pleasure Gardens in 1951. They were popular until the large funfair was removed in 1974. Wandsworth Council inherited the park in 1986 and has been maintaining it ever since.

Step 6: Battersea Park's 200 acres are well worth exploring. Some consider it to be the most interesting of all the London Parks. The carriage drives, lake and mounding were designed in 1854. The park was opened in 1858 by Queen Victoria.



Step 7: Follow the Thames path past the Peace Pagoda, built in 1985 and surrounded by statues of Buddha's life.

Step 14: Next, turn left to follow the Circus Road East that circles the huge building.

Step 8: Continue straight ahead towards Chelsea Bridge.

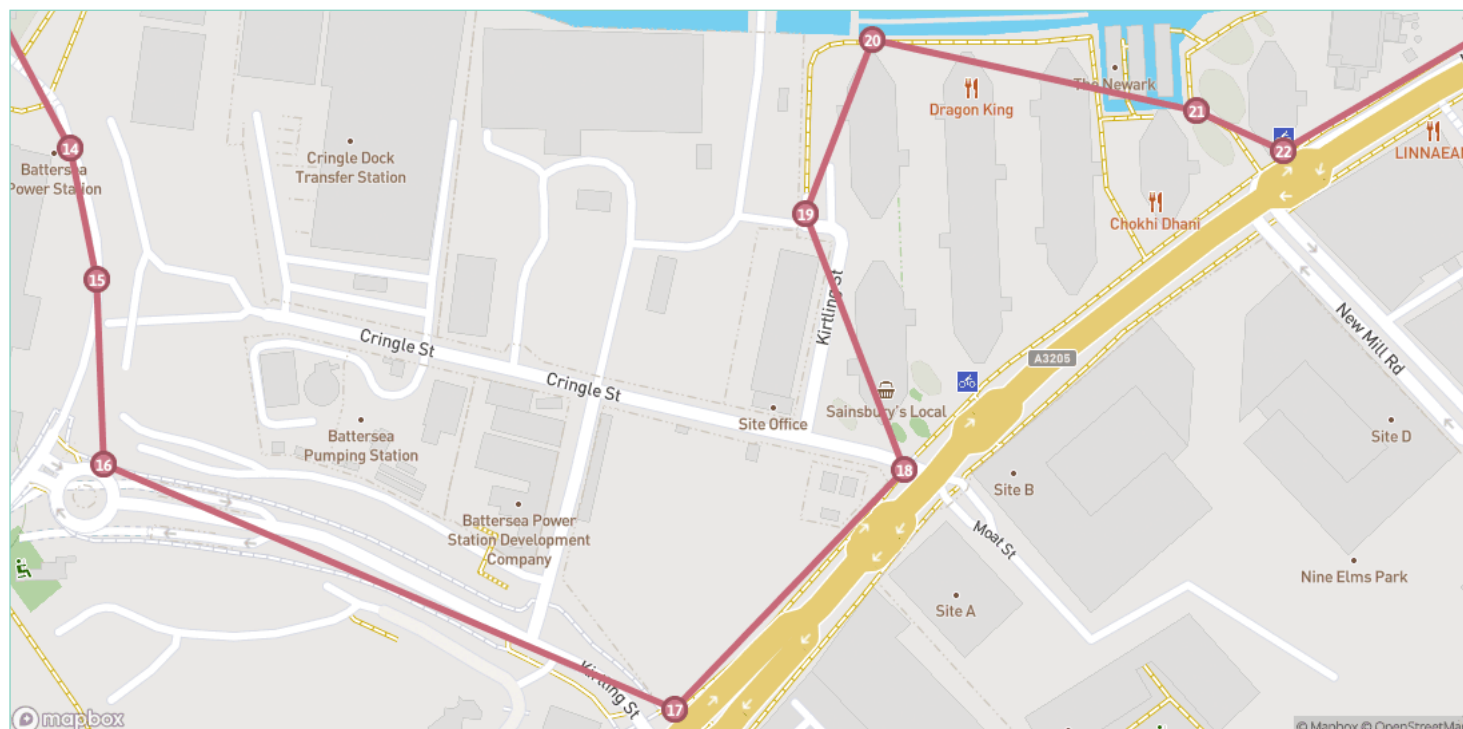
Step 9: Walk under Chelsea Bridge, and then again under Grosvenor Railway Bridge. This one carries all the train traffic into London Victoria.

Step 10: You're now entering the area of new redevelopments around the iconic Battersea Power Station.

Step 11: Continue straight ahead along the river until you come to a temporary construction wall (as of August 2022).

Step 12: There, make almost a complete u-turn to follow the path back towards the power station.

Step 13: Turn left to head towards the iconic structure.



Step 15: Did you know it's big enough to hold both Trafalgar Square and St Paul's Cathedral?

Did you know?

Numerous plans have been designed for the Battersea Power Station site since its closure in 1983 including an indoor theme park and shopping centre but the massive redevelopment is now underway with the power station as the centrepiece. The new City Quarter being created will allow a missing link of the Thames Path to be opened up in due course.

Step 16: At the roundabout, turn left down Kirtling Street.

Step 17: This will bring you to Battersea Park Road, surrounded by construction activity. Turn left onto it.

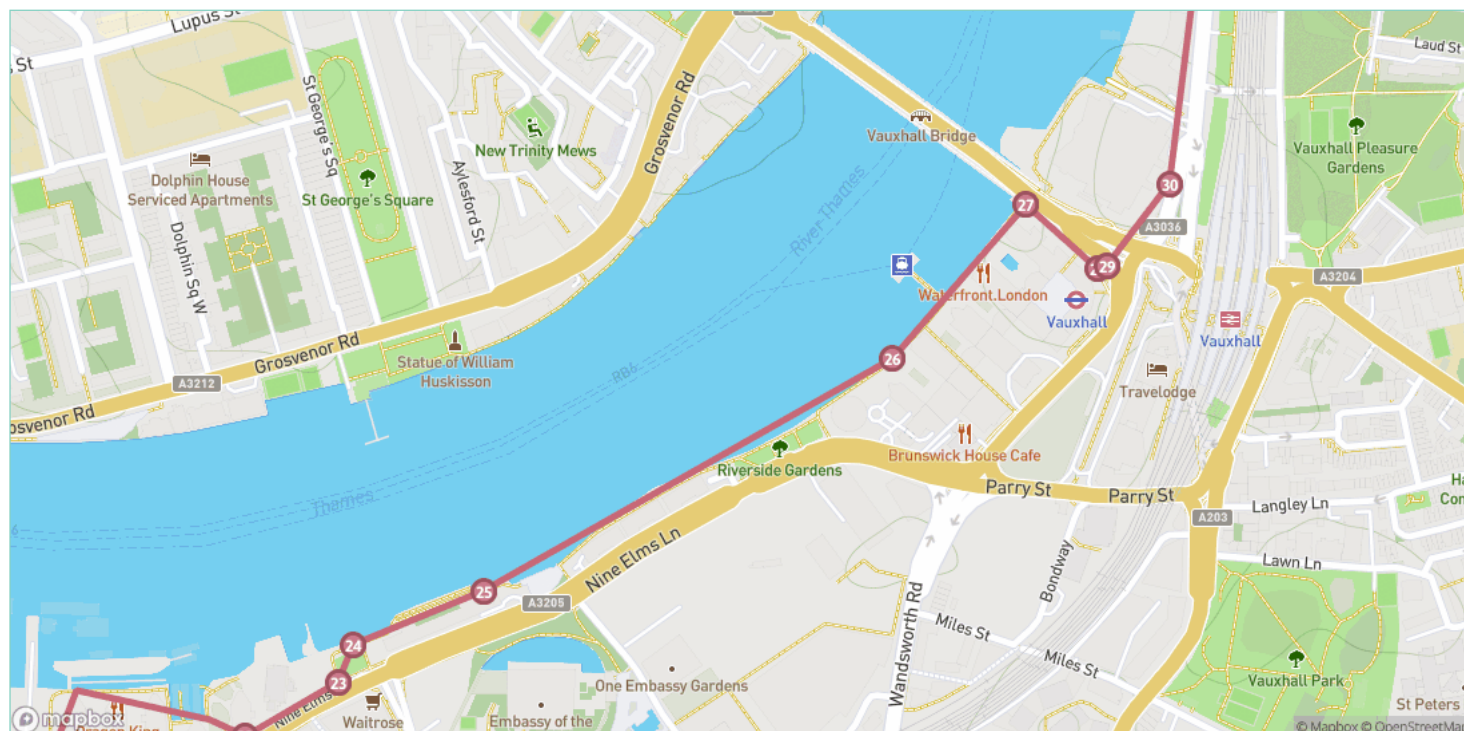
Step 18: Turn left into Cringle Street and then immediately right into Kirtling Street.

Step 19: As the road bends to left, take the pedestrian walkway towards the river, to the left of the apartments.

Step 20: At the river, turn right. Follow the riverside walk as it bends in and out around different inlets.

Step 21: Opposite the Black Cab Coffee Co, turn right back towards Nine Elms Lane.

Step 22: Turn left into Nine Elms Lane for a short stretch along the busy road.



Step 23: After a small construction area, turn left to return to the riverside next to a small green space.

Step 24: Amid the buildings, you might spot the iconic US Embassy building, with its interesting metal cladding.

Step 25: On the opposite bank is Westminster Boating Base, so you might spot lots of sailing boats on the water here.

Step 26: Keep following the riverside walk amid landscaped spaces and new riverside blocks towards Vauxhall Bridge.

Step 27: At Vauxhall Bridge, turn right to join the pavement and walk away from the bridge.

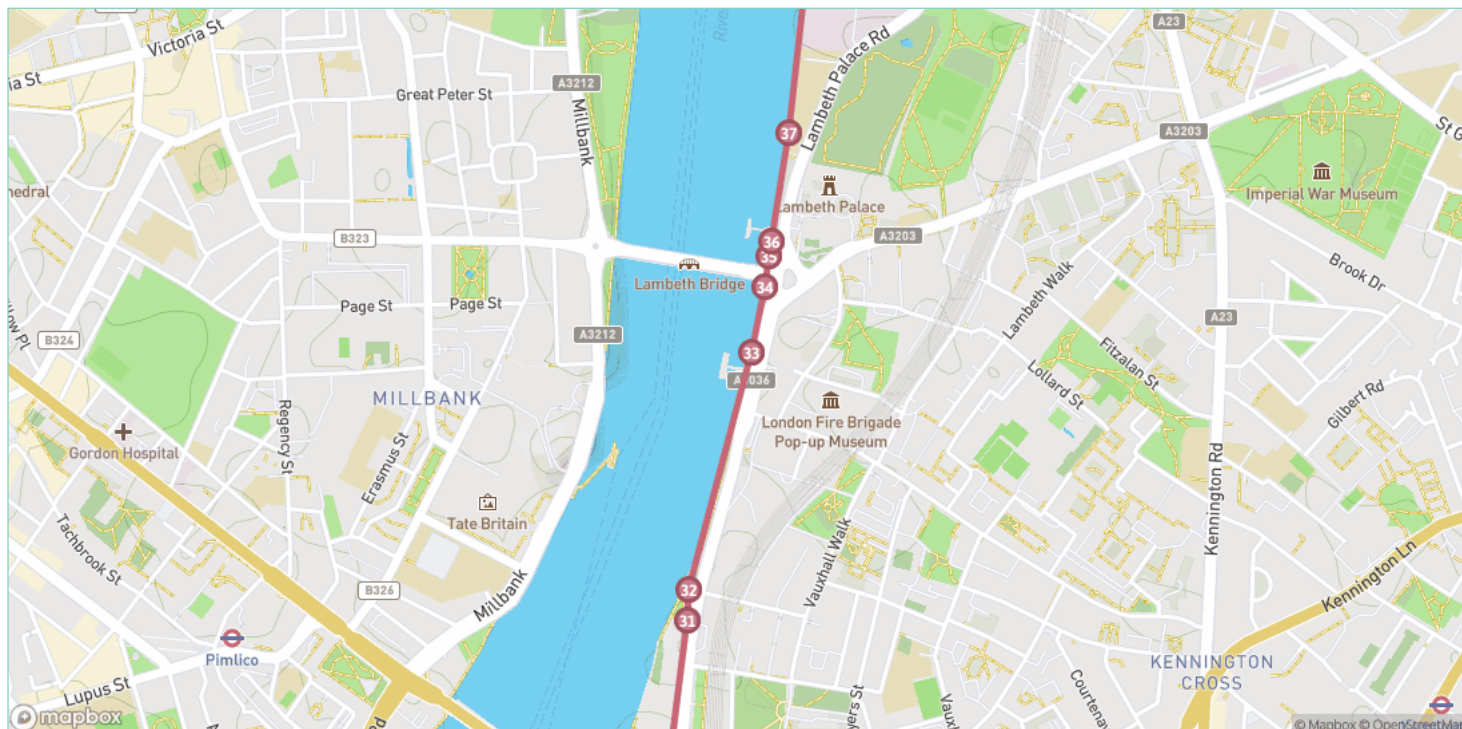
Step 28: This is Vauxhall transport interchange, which combines buses, trains, and the Victoria Line.

Did you know?

Vauxhall transport interchange combines buses, trains and the Victoria line. Its dramatic solar panel roof like a ski slope was designed by Arup. Costing £4 million, the 12 metre-wide, 200 metre-long stainless steel roof rises up 20 degrees and is a significant landmark at this busy intersection.

Step 29: Use the pedestrian crossing opposite the station to cross Vauxhall Bridge road to the left.

Step 30: Continue straight along Albert Embankment. To your left is the futuristic headquarters of MI6, also featured in many films.



Step 31: Soon you'll come to Albert Embankment Gardens. Head left through the gardens to return to the riverside.

Step 32: The sculpture of 12th century Indian philosopher Basaveshwara was unveiled by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015.

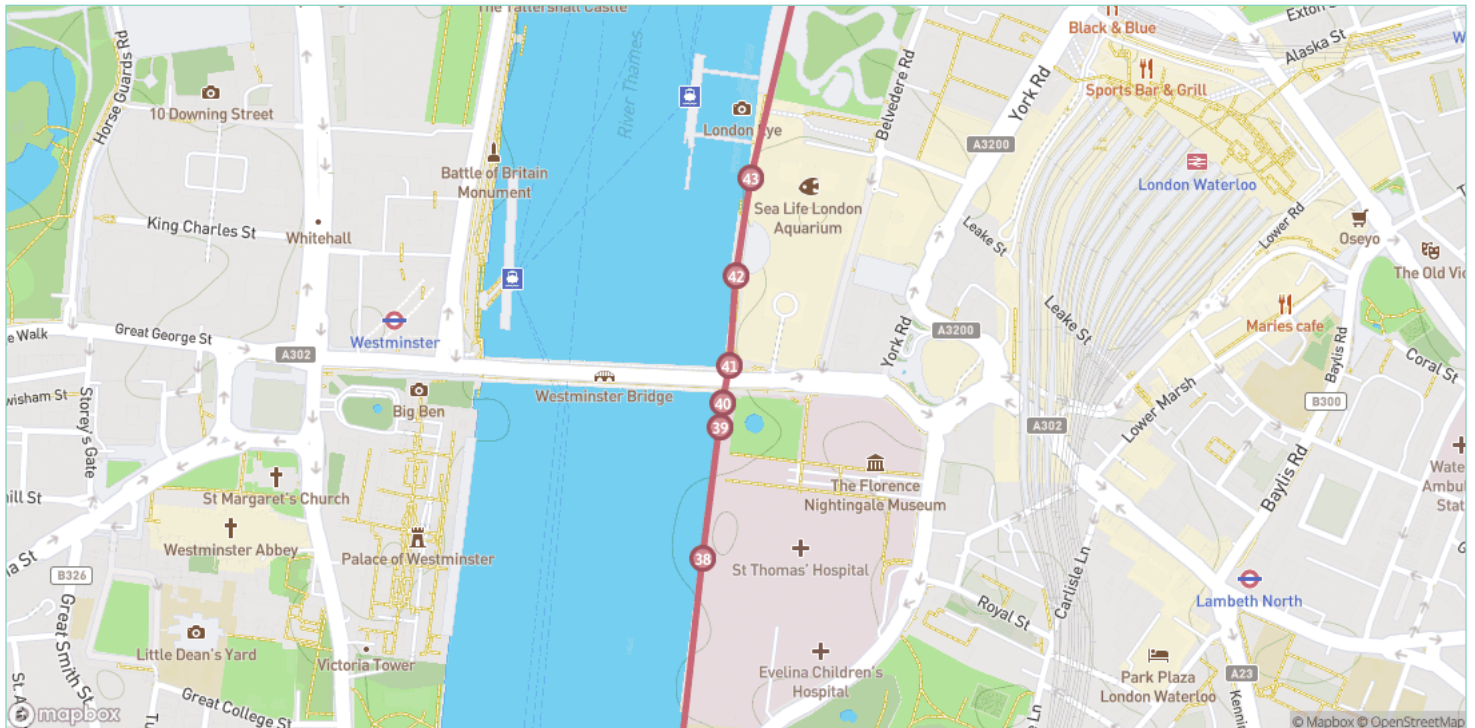
Step 33: Continue along. On your right is the International Maritime Organisation, with an incredible ship sculpture sticking out!

Step 34: Duck under Lambeth Bridge.

Step 35: As you emerge on the other side, Westminster Palace (also known as the Houses of Parliament) comes into clear view.

Step 36: On your right is Lambeth Palace, the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Step 37: Next, walk along the National Covid Memorial Wall, decorated with more than 150,000 red hearts honouring lives lost to Covid-19.



Step 38: Behind the wall is St Thomas' Hospital, and the Florence Nightingale Museum. Collections of personal artefacts illuminate the life and work of 'The Lady of the Lamp' who did so much to help those wounded in the Crimean War.

Step 39: There is a great and iconic London view by Westminster Bridge across to Big Ben just before you pass under the bridge.

Step 40: From here, take the zig zag passageway under Westminster Bridge.

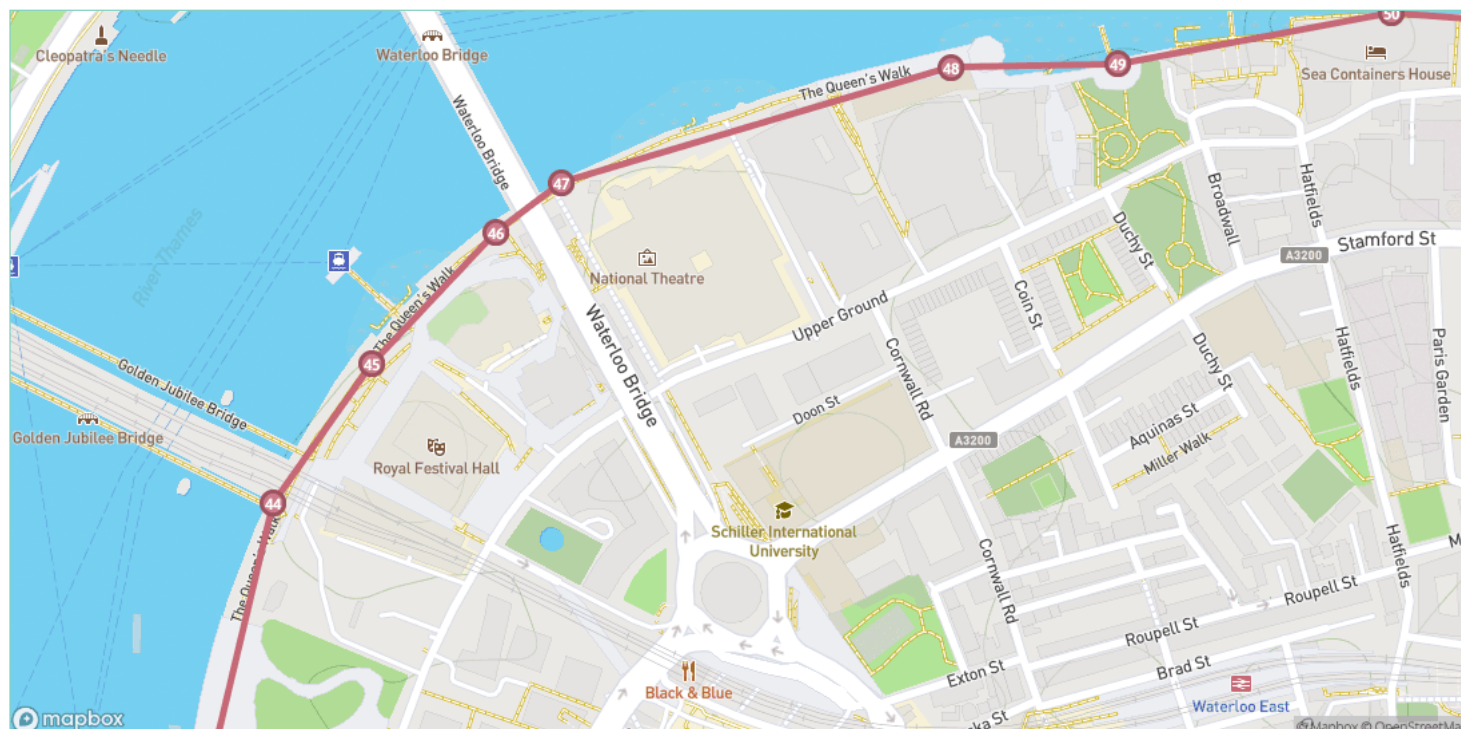
Step 41: Emerge into the hubbub of activity around County Hall, the former home of the Greater London Council.

Did you know?

The imposing edifice of County Hall now houses, among other attractions, a hotel, the Sea Life London Aquarium and London Dungeon.

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Step 43: Pass the wheel of the London Eye, which carries some 15,000 visitors a day in 32 capsules. It takes 30 minutes to complete its revolution.



Step 44: This stretch has the most bridges! The pedestrian bridges along the railway bridge were built in honour of the late Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee.

Step 45: Pass the front of the South Bank Centre. There are plenty of normal benches, and some creative ones, too!

Did you know?

The South Bank Centre is built on the site of the 1951 Festival of Britain. It contains the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Hayward Gallery, with changing exhibitions of modern art, the BFI Southbank and the National Theatre.

Step 46: There are often market stalls along the South Bank, including a book sale under Waterloo Bridge.

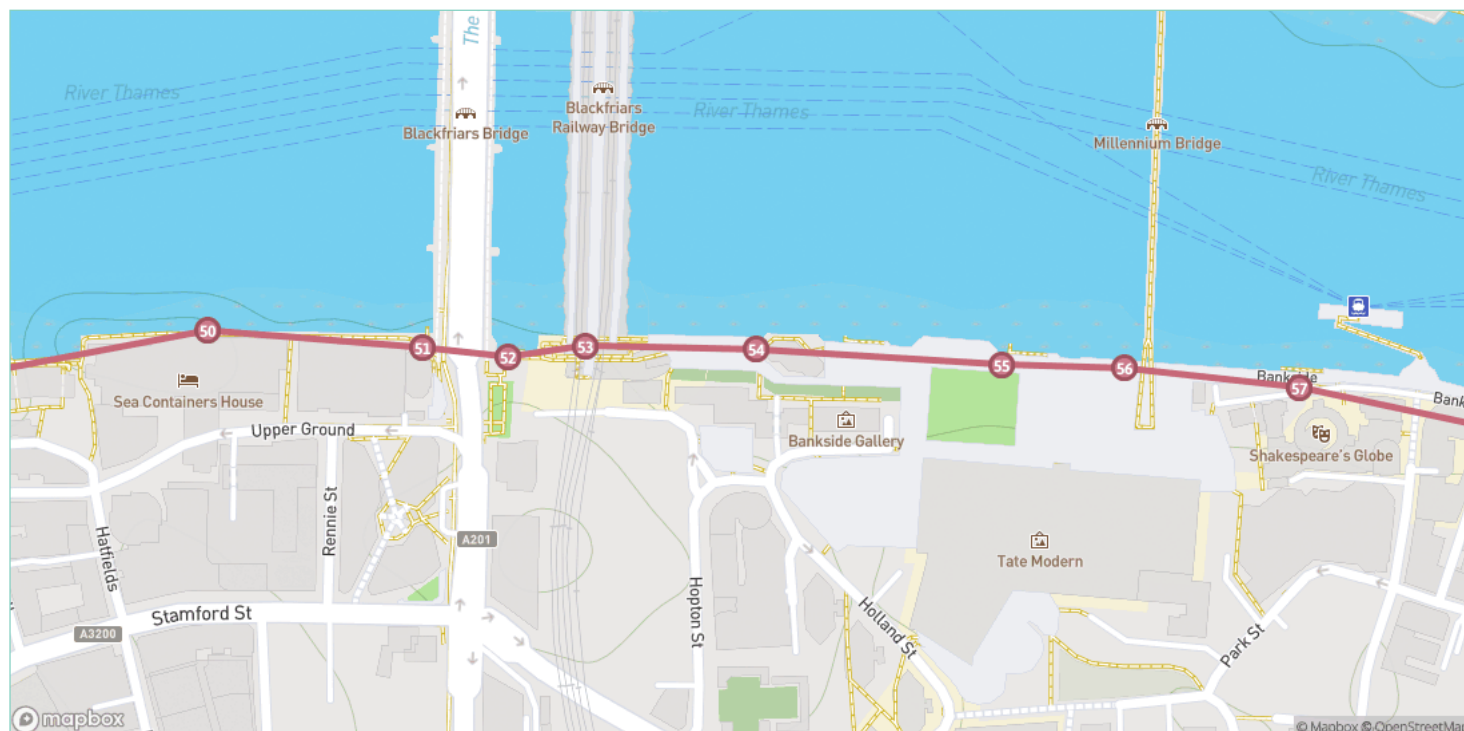
Step 47: You'll pass the statue of Lawrence Olivier on your right outside the National Theatre, built in 1951.

Step 48: This stretch is the Queen's Walk, part of the 14-mile Jubilee Walkway. It buzzes with restaurants, food stands and mime artists.

Step 49: The Oxo Tower and Bernie Spain Gardens are now just ahead.

Did you know?

The Oxo Tower was originally constructed as a power station for the Post Office towards the end of the 19th century. It was later bought by the manufacturers of Oxo beef stock cubes, for conversion into a cold store. It was mainly rebuilt to an art-deco design between 1928 and 1929 by the architect Albert Moore. Much of the original power station was demolished but the river facade was retained and extended. The company wanted to include a tower featuring illuminated signs advertising the name of their product but permission was refused. Instead the tower was built with four sets of three vertically-aligned windows, each of which coincidentally happened to be in the shape of a circle, a cross and a circle, cleverly spelling out OXO.



Step 50: Continue along the river and under building overhangs as you come to Blackfriars Bridge.

Step 51: Walk through the tunnel under the road bridge.

Step 52: Look out for a gorgeous mural on the wall before you head under the railway bridge.

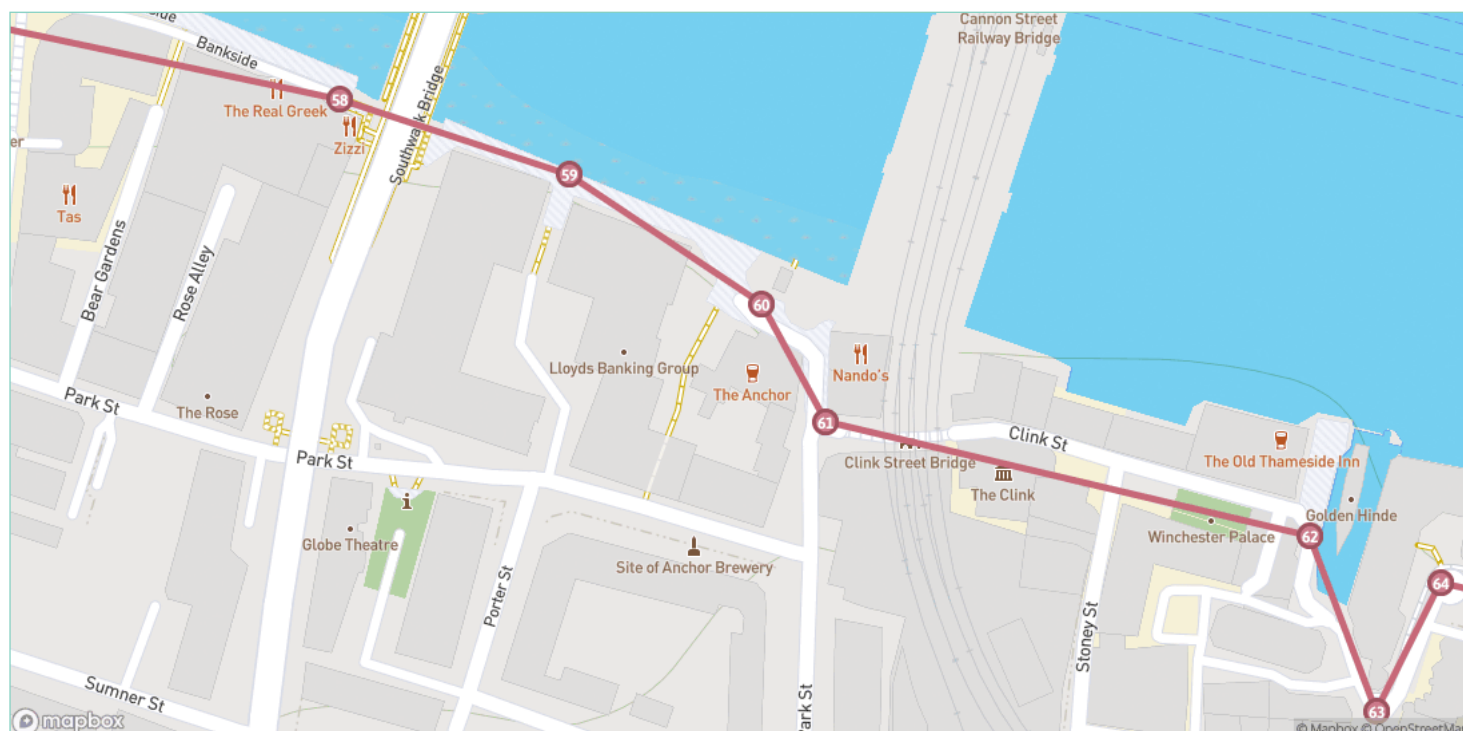
Step 53: Then pass under the Blackfriars Railway Bridge by the station, spotting Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral as you emerge.

Step 54: Continue straight ahead, passing around the Founders Arms. This stretch of the south bank is known as Bankside.

Step 55: The Tate Modern (in the former Bankside Power Station) is ahead. It's free to visit and well worth a detour.

Step 56: Next is the Millenium footbridge, with a spectacular view of St Paul's Cathedral just beyond.

Step 57: Beyond is Shakespeare's Globe, a faithful reproduction of the 1599 open-air theatre for which Shakespeare wrote many of his plays.



Step 58: Head under Southwark Bridge, note the murals depicting London's first Frost Fair, when the Thames froze over in 1564.

Step 59: As you emerge you'll find views across to the tower blocks that make up the financial City of London on the north bank.

Step 60: You'll pass The Anchor pub where Samuel Pepys watched London burning in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Follow the path to the right.

Step 61: Pass under the Cannon Street Railway Bridge towards The Clink museum.

Did you know?

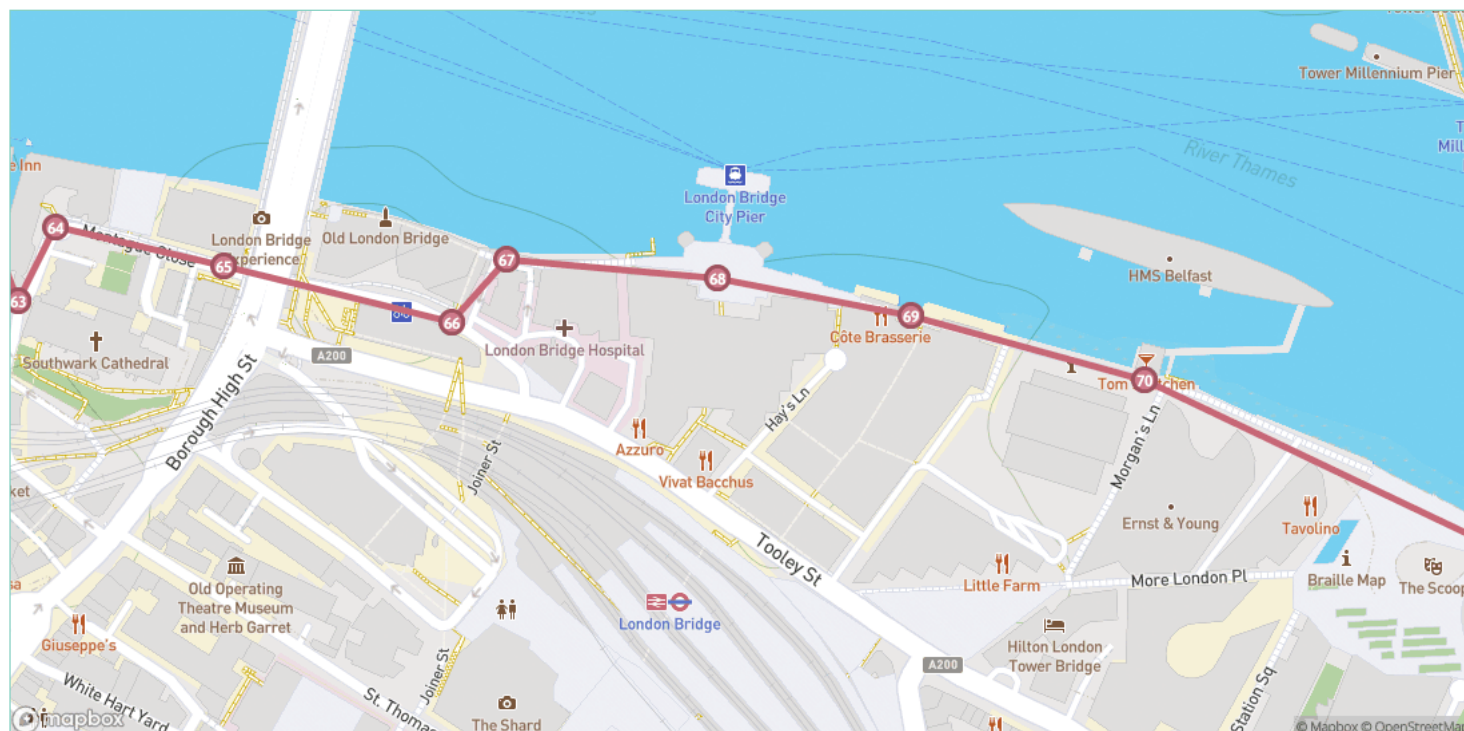
Outside the jurisdiction of the City, the infamous Clink prison is found here. The Clink was probably the oldest prison for both men and women dating from the 12th century and famously interned Catholic and Protestant dissenters. Burned down during the Gordon Riots of 1780 it was never rebuilt. It gave rise to the slang for being in prison, 'in the clink'. Shakespeare once visited a friend in the Clink.

Step 62: Head straight down Clink Street to the replica of Sir Francis Drake's galleon, The Golden Hinde.

Did you know?

This handsome replica has also circumnavigated the world. She was originally known as the Pelican, but renamed by Drake in mid-voyage in 1577, as he prepared to enter the Strait of Magellan. He returned from his year-long voyage laden with amazing treasures.

Step 63: Follow the path inland onto Cathedral Street. At the junction, turn left into Montague Close to walk around the left-hand side of the Southwark Cathedral. At this junction, Borough Market is just to the right.



Step 64: Southwark Cathedral was the tallest structure in London from 1666 to 1710, when St Paul's was built. Now, it's the Shard stands behind it.

Did you know?

The surroundings between Southwark and London Bridge are like something out of a Dickens novel. In fact, the 12-year-old Charles Dickens lived in The Borough when his father was locked up in the infamous Marshalsea debtors' prison in 1824 for a debt of 40 and 10 shillings. Dickens was forced to leave school and go to work in a boot polish factory. He subsequently based several of his fictional characters on this experience, most notably Little Dorrit.

Step 65: Continue along the road under London Bridge.

Step 66: After a short walk on Tooley Street, look for a passage on your left. This is St Olaf Stairs, which will bring you back to the Thames.

Step 67: Turn right along the river. Up ahead, the looming shape of the warship HMS Belfast appears on the Thames.

Step 68: Walk past London Bridge City Pier which offers spectacular views of the City across the river.

Step 69: Pass Hay's Wharf and Galleria.

Did you know?

In its heyday Hay's Wharf handled so much food it was nicknamed London's Larder.

Step 70: The HMS Belfast is a veteran of the World War II Normandy Landings. It's now open daily to the public.



Step 71: Walk past the former City Hall, the distorted glass egg-shaped building, and the green Potters Fields. There are many cafes here.

Step 72: Celebrate arriving at Tower Bridge with a visit to the Tower Bridge Exhibition, which offers superb river views from its high walkway. Why not try out Segment 3a next, continuing on towards Rotherhithe and Greenwich?