# Audio Described Tour

# The Tower of London

## Overview

This self-led audio described tour of the Tower of London takes you around the must-see highlights. The tour is arranged into separate tracks with directions between the main stops to help you navigate the Tower. Narrator 1 provides directional and access information, and Narrator 2 takes you through the history and stories of each stop.

Your tour begins on a wide flag-stone pavement opposite the Beefeater shop near the main entrance.

## Stop 1: Welcome to the Tower

### Narrator 2:

Welcome to this Audio Described Tour of the Tower of London. You should be on a wide pavement of large flagstones, on the opposite side of the pedestrianised cobbled road to the guide collection point.

On this highlights tour we’ll stop at 16 specially chosen places to explore some of the Tower’s incredible stories. The audio for each stop lasts for around two to four minutes. There will also be orientation tracks between each stop to help you on route. Although we suggest you follow our route, some stops are optional – and you’re welcome to stop off at the café or do some exploring of you own.

There is 1 cafe and 4 accessible toilets onsite. The closest toilets to the guide collection point are around 70 metres beyond St Thomas’s Tower, which is the next stop on this tour*.* If you need any help finding anything, just ask any member of staff – they’ll be happy to help.

Now and again as you explore the site you may hear the voices of Yeoman Warders, who run tours for the public every 30 minutes. You may also hear the call of the resident ravens on your way round.

The Tower of London site encloses an area about the size of six football pitches and consists of a central castle keep and other buildings enclosed within two concentric rings of defensive walls, called curtain walls, and a wide moat, which was drained of water in Victorian times. We are standing between the two defensive stone walls in an area called the outer ward. From above, the walls form uneven pentagons with towers where the walls meet. The Thames is on the south side of the Tower, where we are now. The inner wall has battlements with towers and tall narrow houses built against it, which face into a central area called the inner ward. This area opens out with trees and grass, but it is dominated by the square central castle with four turrets known as the White Tower.

Here’s Lucy Worsley Chief Curator at Historic Royal Palaces.

**Lucy Worsley:**

You’re visiting one of the places that in the whole world holds the most history, drama, intrigue, betrayal, and blood. The Tower of London is a castle that’s a thousand years old and it still protects the Crown Jewels. It’s been a luxurious royal palace, it’s been a secure fortress in times of danger, it’s been an infamous prison for enemies of the state, and the place from which kings and queens have exercised their power.

This tour will help you to find the highlights but please don’t forget about the rest and all of our information is themed by the 3 main things that the Tower is, a fortress, a palace, and a prison.

## Stop 2: Directions to St Thomas’s Tower and Traitors Gate

### Narrator 1:

Our first stop is opposite St Thomas’s Tower. As you face across the cobbled road, turn to the left, at 9 o’clock, and keeping the wall on your left move forward for about 40 meters, along the pavement, until it ends at a large gateway. You can feel the honey-coloured stone of the curtain wall as you go. There are some obstructions along this route in the form of low-level signage and some metal fencing.

Once you reach the end of the wall, turn to your right so that the wall is behind you. You’ll be opposite St Thomas’s Tower.

## Stop 3: St Thomas’s Tower and Traitors’ Gate

SFX: Water Swishing – Gate Bolts

### Narrator 2:

After William of Normandy – better known as William the Conqueror – invaded England in 1066, he started building a castle on this site.

The imposing medieval tower in front of you is a water gate built of stone, timber and brick called **St Thomas’s Tower**. King Edward 1st built it as part of a huge new outer ring of defences he added in the 1270’s It was the state entrance for the royal barge and houses royal apartments. It is an oblong, two-storey structure, that originally projected out into the river. It has four solid corner turrets with crenelated tops and narrow window slits called arrow loops for archers to fire through. The upper storey was refaced in the 16th century by Henry VIII. It has decorative red brickwork and three projecting bay windows, known as oriel windows.

Below St Thomas’s Tower is **Traitors’ Gate** and, for some people, entering here would have been a terrifying experience. Traitors’ Gate is a broad pale stone archway about 18 metres wide, surrounded by a basin, containing shallow rippling water for most of the year. Beyond this is a smaller arch with barred gates, originally a water gate to the river but now blocked off by the wharf. The Tower of London was built as a fortress and was ideally suited for its more fearsome role – as a prison. And as a prison, it needed gaolers.

**The Yeomen Warders**, or Beefeaters, have been guarding the Tower of London and its prisoners since the 1480’s and still have duties onsite. Today all Yeoman Warders are ex-servicemen or women from the armed forces. They must have at least 22 years of military service and have been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct medal.

Their uniforms hark back to Tudor times –they wear belted, knee-length tunics over breeches or trousers, navy with scarlet detailing on most days, but bright scarlet with gold on special occasions. The uniform is decorated with richly embroidered emblems and the royal cypher. They have stiff dark blue hats called Tudor bonnets that look like roomy top hats with a wide crown. On special occasions, their bonnet is black with a red, white, and blue hat band.

## Stop 4: Directions to Inside the Fortress

### Narrator 1:

Our next stop is the Inner ward, as we follow in the footsteps of those early prisoners – and go into the heart of the Tower.

If you want to visit the toilets before you do that, continue along the cobbled lane, keeping St Thomas’s Tower on your right. Continue straight on for 70 metres, past large gateways on either side of the lane and the toilets are after these on the right. Pause the tour and return to the gateway opposite St Thomas’s Tower when you’re ready to continue.

The gateway behind you and to your left is known as the Bloody Tower. Go through this gate, feeling the stone walls and studded wooden doors. There is an obstruction of metal fencing, which is spikey at the top, to your left. Overhead is a portcullis *- a spiked grate that could be lowered to block the entrance.* Beyond the Gate is a cobbled street leading uphill.

The next stop is just beyond the gate - there are a couple of benches on the left if you would like to sit and listen to the next track, alternatively, stand with your back to the wall on your left.

## Stop 5: Inside the Fortress

### Narrator 2:

Here, is a good place to describe the layout of London’s great medieval fortress.

Diagonally on our left, at 11 o’clock, is the huge and imposing square bulk of the **White Tower**. This was William the Conqueror’s original fortified tower, the stronghold at the heart of the fortress, built in the 11th century to subdue and awe the local population. It is a three-story Norman castle of light grey stone much of which was imported from France, with arched windows and a wooden staircase leading up to the entrance. When completed it was one of the tallest buildings in London. It was painted white in the 13th century. But today it is unpainted.

Rising above the crenelated battlements at the top are four tall narrow turrets. In the 16th century during the reign of Henry VIII, the original pointed turret tops were replaced with silvery lead domes with golden weathervanes on top. The domes are known as onion domes because their curved and rounded shape looks like the top of an onion.

Built around the White Tower and within this large inner ward are the main buildings we will be visiting on our tour.

Curator Alden Gregory:

### Alden Gregory:

The White Tower is defended by two concentric rings of curtain walls. To get to where you are now you’ve passed through several imposing gate houses that pierce those walls. These defences were extended and strengthened in the 13th century on the orders of Kings Henry III and Edward I. It was Edward who added the outer ring of walls and had the wide moat dug to protect them.

If you thought it was hard to get into the Tower today, just imagine how difficult it was in Edward I’s day! Each of the gatehouses you’ve passed through, were secured with thick wooden doors and there were heavy portcullis gates that could be dropped through slots above in times of attack. The outer gates which defended the causeway across the moat had an extra layer of defence; drawbridges that could be raised and lowered by the guards. With the help of these gates the Tower has withstood attack on several occasions. There’s no wonder kings and queens chose this as a place of sanctuary in times of trouble and have used it as a place to keep their prized possessions safe.

### Narrator 2:

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 6: Directions to Execution Memorial

### Narrator 1:

We are going further into the inner ward to our next stop – an execution memorial on Tower green. It is about 50 metres away and remember you can pause your audio at any point. Continue left up the slope and go up twolong flights of stone stairs, where there is a handrail on the left, and turn left, at 9 o’clock.

Tower Green is straight ahead and has two lawns separated by a wide paved area and bordered by low railings. The round, glass memorial is set back from the paved area on the right, surrounded by a metal barrier approximately 50cm in height.

Travel diagonally to your right, at 1 o’clock, for approximately 20 meters towards the glass memorial.

## Stop 7: Execution Memorial

SFX: Drumbeat

### Narrator 2:

This memorial symbolically marks the Tower as an execution site. It features a contemporary sculpture surrounded by a low safety rail. At the centre of the sculpture is a silver stand supporting a crystal pillow, indented as if someone's head had been recently resting on it. The pillow rests on a glass disc above a larger stone disc that is about a metre and a half across. Around the glass disc are the names of some of the people who were executed here. Around the stone disc is a poem that reads:

Gentle visitor, pause awhile. Where you stand, death cut away the light of many days. Here jewelled names were broken down from the vivid thread of life. May they rest in peace while we walk the generations around their strife and courage under these restless skies.

Curator Alden Gregory again:

### Alden Gregory:

Relatively few people have been executed inside the Tower of London’s walls. In fact, more people were executed here during the two world wars than in all of the centuries before. The vast majority of executions actually happened outside the Tower on Tower Hill. These were very public events where audiences could watch from specially erected grandstands.

Only a handful of high-status prisoners, people like Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Lady Jane Grey, were granted the respect and privilege of a more private execution inside the Tower. Their lives ended brutally in front of a small, invited audience on a scaffold near to this spot.

### Narrator 2:

Around Tower Green are some important buildings in the Tower’s history. We won’t be going there on this tour, but we’ll briefly describe each one in case you’d like to visit any of them afterwards.

As you face the Execution Memorial, the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula is on the far side of the lawn. This is the Tower's parish church.

It was built more than 500 years ago for Henry VIII and became the final resting place for many of the Tower’s executed prisoners, including Henry VIII’s wives Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard.

To the left as you face the memorial, there is a formidable stone-faced building called Beauchamp Tower which is built into the western wall of the inner ward. Originally completed in about 1281, it has been used throughout its history to house prisoners. On the ground floor of the tower is an exhibition about notable prisoners and on the first floor, some of their original carved graffiti, now protected behind glass. There are some tactiles of the graffiti you can touch but bear in mind there is a very narrow spiral staircase leading to the exhibition if you wish to explore this after the tour.

And finally, if you turn your back to the execution memorial, you’ll be facing towards the infamous Bloody Tower, diagonally to the left, at 11 o’clock, on the far side of a large lawn. It’s best known for the story of the Princes in the Tower. The young heir to the throne and his brother were brought here after the death of their father Edward IV in 1483. The boys were last seen playing in a garden at the Tower and then mysteriously disappeared allowing their uncle to claim the throne as Richard III.

Our next stop is to visit the Crown Jewels exhibition. Before we move on, play the next track to hear pre-visit information and directions.

## Stop 8: Directions to the Crown Jewels

SFX: Music: Regel Trumpeting

### Narrator 1:

This spectacular exhibition explores the origins of the Crown Jewels, including the destruction of the original jewels during the English Civil War. Displayed over 7 rooms, it leads us towards the Treasury, where most of the Crown Jewels themselves are on display. Please note that it can be noisy and crowded inside the exhibition, and light levels are quite low throughout. If you wish to skip the Crown Jewels, our next stop will be the famous White Tower.

The routes to both the Crown Jewels and the White Tower start off the same.

With the memorial behind you, take a couple of steps forward and turn left. Walk ahead for approximately 10 meters, if you are using a white cane, you can use the railings on your left as a shoreline if you choose. There may be an obstruction in the form of a bench along this route. When the railings stop you will be in an open thoroughfare called the Broadwalk.

Walk diagonally left, at 11 o’clock, for approximately 15 meters, over paving slabs, where you will find a tall signpost. To your right is the White Tower. To your left is a long, three-storey building clad in honey-coloured limestone. This is the Waterloo Block, which houses the Crown Jewels.

If you want to skip on to the White Tower, turn right, at 2 o’clock, and continue walking straight on past the tower for another 50 metres or so.

Turn to the right, to 3 o’clock, and walk forward a couple of steps, you’ll have reached the far corner of the White Tower. There might be an obstruction in the form of a bench in front of you. When you reach this corner, press 17 and play.

If you’re ready to visit the Crown Jewels continue left along the diagonal route, at 11 o’clock, for approximately 40 meters.

You should reach a waist height metal barrier with a metal gate, near the entrance to the Crown Jewels exhibition. If you have reached a lower 1 meter high barrier you have gone too far to the left. Follow this along with the barrier on your left until you reach the higher barrier. You may hear the shouting and stomping of the armed military guards.

The exhibition is very popular and there is often a long queue at the entrance, snaking its way through metal queue barriers. Please either ask a Yeoman Warder – there is usually one patrolling the Broadwalk – or wait at the metal gate to enter. A member of staff should approach within a few minutes to give you priority access.

Play the next track before you enter.

## Stop 9: An Introduction to the Crown Jewels

SFX: Music: Regal trumpeting

### Narrator 2:

The Crown Jewels are displayed in a secure vault called the Treasury. What you are about to experience is the real thing! It’s an opportunity to get up close to some of the most famous jewels in the world.

Much more than just gold and jewels - they are a working collection - used at coronations and other royal ceremonies. There might be an ‘in use’ sign in place of an object, this means the Monarch could actually be using it as you walk through the exhibition!

The most important ceremonial objects in the collection are called the coronation regalia, and each has a part to play during the coronation ceremony. The regalia in the Treasury are displayed in the order in which they are used in the coronation service. After swearing an oath, the monarch is anointed with holy oil. Then during the investiture, the Archbishop of Canterbury presents the monarch with objects including a ring, a sword, a sceptre, an orb, and places St Edward’s crown on their head. The Crown Jewels have been kept at the Tower since 1661 and have been displayed in this building since 1967.

Inside the Treasury are not just precious crowns and jewels, but historic objects used for royal ceremonies, banquets, and christenings.

To hear the directions to enter the Treasury, where the Crown Jewels are kept, play the next track once you are shown inside.

## Stop 10: Directions to Inside the Treasury

### Narrator 1:

Inside the Waterloo Block, the route zigzags through seven rooms, all created within an undercroft area with a vaulted ceiling and no natural light. Within the differently sized rooms are free-standing display cases and pillars, which visitors can walk either side of. Although there are no detailed descriptions of these exhibits on this tour, you are welcome to take time to explore, and there are always wardens available if you have any questions. They’re very knowledgeable and always happy to help. Focused lighting picks out glittering objects within the cases, and ambient music highlights the feeling of anticipation as we make our way through to the Treasury itself.

This first room has a flag-stoned floor and walls of deep burgundy. A large, rectangular display case in the centre holds the empty State Crown frames worn by past monarchs. Although George IV’s crown contained over 12,000 diamonds, the stones were hired only for the coronation ceremony and later removed. Some of the jewels from the other two frames have been reset in the current Imperial State Crown – the last crown displayed in the Treasury.

You exit this room in the far-right corner, at 1 o’clock, and up a slope into a larger room with a carpeted floor.

Once in this room, step to the left with the wall behind you. You may like to pause the audio until you are there.

This space is devoted to the origins of the collection. These include the destruction of the earlier Crown Jewels during the English Civil war and the stories of the Koh-I-Noor and Cullinan diamonds. A row of three large arch-shaped screens on the far left-hand wall display short videos with music showing maps following the diamonds’ routes to England from all over the world. In the centre of the room, at 10 o’clock are three tall slim showcases containing objects telling these stories.

With the wall still behind you, walk diagonally left, at 11 o’clock, towards the central showcase.

Turn right around the far side of the showcase, keeping the large screens and music on your left, and walk straight ahead for four meters and exit through an archway.

Enter a small annex, turn right, and move forward a few metres into another larger space. Once in this room, take a step to the right with the wall behind you. You may like to pause the audio until you are here.

In this carpeted room with dark blue walls, we face three more arch-shaped screens, which show film footage of a number of historical and more modern Royal processions. You may hear the sounds of cheering crowds, marching boots, horses’ hooves, and military bands. In a line down the centre of the room, display cases hold glittering objects related to processions; golden ceremonial maces and swords, state trumpets with maroon and gold embroidered banners hanging from them. There are also dazzling items of clothing from the Royal Ceremonial Dress collection which were actually worn at historic coronations.

Moving on, walk straight ahead for eight meters, passing in between the showcases and towards the screens with music. When you reach the opposite wall turn right and walk on ahead, exiting through an archway and into a long, straight corridor with a flag-stone floor.

Go along the corridor, using the left-hand wall as a shoreline if you choose. At the end of the corridor go through two arch doorways then turn right into another small dimly lit annex. You may like to pause the audio until you are here.

3 metres ahead of you are a set of large double metal doors. This is the entrance to the Treasury, and the thickness of the steel security doors is echoed by the wide metal threshold on the floor.

Walk through these doors and take four steps into the room, then turn right and walk to feel the wall in front of you. Turn and stand with your back to the wall, and another wall on your right, and play the next track.

## Stop 11: Inside the Treasury

### Narrator 2:

Welcome to the Treasury, where you will experience objects that are completely genuine, utterly unique, and priceless.

The thick metal doors you have just come through are a working feature of the Treasury. Half a metre thick, they are closed every night for security.

With your back to the wall, there are two display cases in front of you. They can get crowded, so we’ll describe what’s in them while you stand here, but if you’d like to get closer to any objects before you move on to the next stop, please feel free.

All of the exhibits are displayed in glass cases, and rest upon dark blue velvet. They are lit from above and seem to float in the shadowy light. As you pass them, light flashes, refracting off the jewel encrusted items, and a rainbow of colours sparkles off the embedded precious jewels.

In the middle of the room on the right-hand side, at 2 o’clock, is a tall slim case that’s accessible from all sides. Displayed inside, is the 12th century **Coronation Spoon**, the only item from the medieval regalia that survived being destroyed during the English Civil War. The rest of the coronation regalia in the Treasury were either made for Charles II in 1661 to replace the items destroyed in the Civil War or have been made for more recent monarchs. The gleaming golden Coronation Spoon is a unique survival and is about the size of a large dessert spoon, covered in intricately engraved designs. The spoon is used to anoint the new monarch with holy oil, taken from a vessel called an ‘ampulla’. The golden ampulla, which is displayed with the spoon, is shaped like an eagle with a removable head.

In front of you, on the other side of the room, a much larger case that’s accessible from all sides, contains the glittering **Imperial Mantle** - a long cloak with a two-metre-long train made from real cloth of gold, embroidered with roses, thistles and shamrocks, that was first used by George IV in 1821. The showcase also contains other items used during the investiture when the monarch is robed and then presented with symbolic objects. The **Jewelled Sword of Offering** represents the monarch’s knightly virtues and is offered at the High Altar.

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 12: Directions to The Coronation Regalia

### Narrator 1:

We’re going to move on now to the central display of the Crown Jewels. With your back still to the wall, move forward for approximately six meters, and then turn left for five meters to a short staircase on your right-hand side that has a low handrail on both sides.

Walk up the three steps on the left-hand side if possible.

You are now on a raised platform overlooking a long room in the centre of which are five display cases, each containing the glittering coronation regalia and flanked by two slow moving travellators on either side of the cases. As the travelator passes along, the light catches the opulence of the regalia, as it dances off the reflective surfaces of the precious jewels.

On the platform in front of you are graphic information panels with tactile models of the regalia. We suggest that you explore these first, and then go back to use the travellators to get closer to the jewel cases if you wish to.

When you’re there play the next track.

## Stop 13 – The Coronation Regalia

SFX: Music: Regal trumpeting music

### Narrator 2:

Each of the 5 panels and tactile objects on this platform relate to the showcase in front of them. We’ll describe the tactile objects in turn, in the order in which you’ll reach them. If you’d like to listen to the descriptions as you handle each tactile, pause the audio between each one.

**The Sovereign’s Sceptre with Cross.**

This sceptre is a golden staff almost a metre long, topped by an enormous diamond and a jewelled cross. It was made for the coronation of Charles II in 1661 and during the coronation ceremony it’s presented to the monarch as part of the investiture.

The tactile model is just the very top section and is life-size. Throughout its history, various alterations have been made to the top and in 1910, the largest colourless diamond in the world was added. The diamond – known as Cullinan I – is about the size of a small pear and was cut from the famous Cullinan diamond. Uncut, the diamond weighed over 3,000 carats, about 600 grammes.

The top of the sceptre has four different sections. The lowest is a gold and enamelled mount decorated with floral shapes – set with tiny jewels. Above is the dazzling tear-drop shaped Cullinan diamond, held by curling gold and white enamel pins decorated with rubies. Above this is large amethyst monde, *which is globe shaped,* and has jewelled bands around it. At the very top is a cross-pattée – a type of cross with arms that are narrow where they join at the centre and flare out to be broader at the ends. The cross has a square-shaped emerald centre and set with diamonds.

**Move onto the next tactile object which is St Edward’s Crown.**

St Edward’s Crown is the most important and sacred of all the crowns. It is only used at the moment of crowning a new monarch, which happens just after the investiture.

St Edward’s Crown is trimmed with ermine beneath a gold band that is set with coloured jewels. A purple velvet cap sits within four arches encrusted with semi-precious stones and is topped with a Monde and cross pattée. It weighs 2.23 kilos. The tactile model is actual size!

**Move onto the next tactile object which is the Prince of Wales Coronet.**

The eldest son of a British monarch is given the title Prince of Wales. Their regalia includes a special crown called a coronet. The design of the coronet was specified by King Charles II in 1677 as a ‘coronet composed of crosses and fleurs-de-lis with one arch, and in the midst a ball and cross’. Each coronet has a single arch, compared to the monarch’s crown, which has two arches.

**Next move along to Queen Mary’s Orb which can be found in the centre of a longer panel.**

The Sovereign’s orb is presented to the monarch as part of the investiture, then placed on the altar, just before the monarch is crowned.

This life-size tactile model is Queen Mary’s orb, but it’s very similar to the Sovereign’s.

Queen Mary II was crowned as joint sovereign with her husband King William III in 1689. As William’s equal, Mary needed her own orb and sceptre. This new regalia was made for her coronation in 1689 and has not been used since.

Queen Mary’s orb is about the size of a melon and represents the globe. The smooth hollow gold sphere has a jewelled band running horizontally around the middle and another arcing over the top, dividing the orb into three. These three sections represent the known continents of the medieval world. The bands are outlined in jewels and pearls.

On top of the orb is a cross decorated with jewels. The cross is a reminder to the monarch of the belief that God reigns over the Christian world and is the source of their power.

**Now move onto the next tactile object which is the Crown of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.**

This tactile model is around 75% of life-size.

The huge Koh-I-Noor diamond, one of the most famous diamonds in the world, is set in the front of this crown, just above the diamond encrusted horizontal band around the base. The platinum frame glitters with 2,800 diamonds.

Probably originating from mines in central southern India, the Koh-I-Noor has had a turbulent history. A symbol of conquest, it has had many previous owners, including Mughal Emperors, Shahs of Iran, Emirs of Afghanistan, and Sikh Maharajas. The East India Company took the jewel from the deposed Maharaja, 10-year-old Maharaja Duleep Singh, as a condition of the Treaty of Lahore. The treaty compelled him to surrender the Koh-I-Noor to Queen Victoria, along with control of his Punjabi kingdom.

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 14: Directions to The Imperial State Crown

### Narrator 1:

Our final Stop in the Treasury is The Imperial State Crown.

If you’d like to get closer to the displays we’ve just described, return to the start of the platform, go down the 3 steps, and keep right and right again to step onto the travelator, which will take you the full length of this platform.

If you don’t want to use the travelator, continue in the direction we’ve been moving, go down the 3 steps at the end of this viewing platform. Move forward slightly right for 3 metres until you reach a pillar on your right.

Turn right around the pillar and walk straight ahead for approximately 8 meters.

Turn left and walk for approximately another 8 meters down a corridor, using the right-hand wall as a shoreline if you choose. At the end of the corridor take a step to the right and stand with the wall behind you. The Imperial State Crown will be directly in front of you in a single display case in the centre of the room.

When you’re there, play the next track.

## Stop 15 - The Imperial State Crown

### Narrator 2:

The Imperial State Crown was made for the coronation of George VI in 1937. It is worn by the sovereign at the end of the coronation service. It is the monarch’s working crown - worn at official events or services - most notably at the State Opening of Parliament each year.

This impressive crown is over 31 cm tall and weighs more than one kilogram. The frame is made of gold, silver and platinum and is decorated with a staggering number of jewels. 2,868 diamonds, 269 pearls, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, and 4 rubies.

The diamonds and precious stones catch the light and refract a myriad of rainbow colours while you walk around the display case.

The band at the base has sapphires and emeralds set between rows of pearls. The second largest stone cut from the Cullinan Diamond – Cullinan 2 - sits in the very front of the band with the huge “Black Princes Ruby” just above it.

The arches take the form of oak leaves and acorns, created from diamonds and pearls. At the intersection of the arches, there are four large pear-shaped pearls, each with a ‘diamond cap’; these are called ‘Queen Elizabeth’s Earrings’.

Above the intersection is the silver monde covered in tiny diamonds. The cross-pattée sits above, also covered in diamonds, and set with a sapphire known as ‘St Edward’s Sapphire.’

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 16: Directions to The White Tower

### Narrator 1:

To leave the Crown Jewels exhibition turn left and walk for 3 meters to a set of double metal doors that lead to the gift shop. Go through these, turn right, and pass through another set of doors that will lead you outside and go down the slope for 4 meters. Once outside, there are accessible toilets round to the left.

If you would like to take a break, the New Armouries Café is located around the corner. Turn right, at 3 o’clock, and go straight for 10 meters. Then turn diagonally right, at 2 o’clock, and walk ahead for 7 meters onto the Broadwalk. Turn left and go down the hill for around 80 metres. The café will be on your left.

Our next stop is at the White Tower. To get there turn right, at 3 o’clock, and walk for approximately 10 meters. Then turn diagonally right, at 2 o’clock, and walk for approximately 40 meters across the Broadwalk to a wooden guard box. If you go too far right, you will reach some steps and if you go too far left you will reach some low railings surrounding a grass lawn. You can pause your audio until you are there.

With the guard box on your left, take a few steps forward until you reach the nearest corner of the White Tower. This corner is the only corner on the Tower to have a rounded turret – the other three have square corners. When you’re there, feel the original stone wall that has stood for a thousand years.

Play the next track to hear about the White Tower and for very important pre-visit information.

## Stop 17 – The White Tower

SFX: Castle Sounds and Music

### Narrator 2:

The White Tower was built on the orders of William the Conqueror, who seized the crown nearly a thousand years ago after victory at the Battle of Hastings. It is a tall, three-story Norman castle with a long wooden staircase leading up to the entrance on the raised ground floor. It is built of grey ragstone, which has an uneven surface, with detailing in smoother pale Caen stone.

It’s called the White Tower, because from the 13th to the 17th centuries it was regularly whitewashed. Rising above the crenelated battlements at the top are four tall narrow turrets with silvery lead domes and golden weathervanes. Three of the turrets are square, but the one we are standing closest to is circular and it contains a long spiral staircase. Because it was so secure, the Tower was the perfect place to store valuables. This led to the building’s role today – as a museum, for the Royal Armouries collection of historic weapons and armour.

### Narrator 1:

Please be aware that access to the White Tower, and between each of its three floors, is by stairs only. There are 204 steps in total. Allow at least 30 – 40 minutes to explore the whole building.

This tour includes stops on each floor, and it is possible to listen to the descriptions without going inside if you prefer. With the wall in front of you there is a bench on both sides where you can sit and listen or head to the New Armouries Café if you like. If you do go inside there is a one-way system within the Tower leading upwards, but it is possible to exit with a staff member at any time if requested. For instance, you might choose to visit the ground floor only. There are staff available on each floor if you need help or have any questions.

Inside, on the Entrance Floor, you can explore the Royal Armouries Collection and hear a description of Henry VIII’s armour. More stairs lead to the first floor where we will stop at the Grand Chamber and St John’s Chapel. A short spiral staircase leads up to the second floor where Jakob’s chair will be described. The exit from here is via a long, narrow, spiral staircase to the basement which has over one hundred steps.

If you’ve decided not to visit the White Tower, you can either listen to the White Tower stops elsewhere or skip straight to nearby Stop 29 to hear about the Trial of Anne Boleyn. To get to stop 29, with the White Tower behind you, continue walking straight for 12 meters with a low fence on your right-hand side.

Follow the fence as it turns right and walk down the sloping path which has an uneven surface for around 75 meters.

This route has benches and bins as obstacles on the right. Stop when you pass a mature tree on your left and a double bench on your right. When you get there, press 29 and then play.

To hear the directions to the White Tower, play the next track.

## Stop 18: Directions to White Tower Entrance Floor: Henry VIII’s Armour

### Narrator 1:

The entrance to the White Tower is on the south side of the building. Remember you can pause the audio at any point along the way. With your back to the wall of the White Tower, go forward for approximately 12 meters keeping the low fence on your right-hand side and then turn and follow the fence around to the right.

Walk straight ahead for approximately 40 meters down a sloping path, using the low fence on your right as a shoreline if you choose. If you follow the fence, you will encounter obstructions in the form of benches and bins.

After 40 meters and at a gap in the low fence turn right onto a gentle slope with low fencing on both sides.

Walk for approximately 25 meters where you will find a large wooden staircase leading up to the Entrance Floor of the White Tower.

The first flight of stairs is straight with a wooden handrail on both sides and a central metal handrail.

At the top of the stairs turn right onto the landing. Take a few steps forward and turn left to the second flight of stairs, again with outer handrails and a central handrail.

At the top of the second flight, walk straight across a landing for a few steps to approach the third flight of stairs again with 3 handrails.

At the top of the third flight, turn right and walk for approximately 2.5 meters to the fourth flight containing 4 stairs with no central handrail. Go up these and enter the first hall through double doors. You can pause the audio until you get there.

Once inside the Tower, turn right to follow the wooden walkway. The route goes straight then doubles back on itself for 6 meters. Then turn right and the walkway straightens out with a low metal barrier on the right-hand side. This is in front of a display of life-size wooden horses and armours.

Follow this barrier keeping it on your right for 6 meters and stop when it turns to the right. You should now be opposite three display cases showing suits of armour worn by Henry VIII at different ages. We will be describing the largest armour that he wore later in life.

## Stop 19 - White Tower Entrance Floor: Henry VIII’s Armour

SFX: Castle Sounds and Music

### Narrator 2:

This massive steel armour belonged to Henry VIII and is one of the great treasures of the Royal Armouries collection. It was made to fit the King’s body exactly – so this is as near as we get to meeting Henry VIII as he lived. Getting this close to the armour gives us an indication of how intimidating he might have seemed in person. The armour shows Henry to be about six foot one with a substantial waistline. By the time this was made – in 1540 – he was forty-nine or fifty years old.

The gleaming suit weighs over 31 kilos and was made for him by the royal armourers with decorated gilt borders designed by Hans Holbein the Younger. The armour has articulated joints that allowed ease of movement. There are smooth parts like the breastplate, with overlapping parts protecting the upper arms and thighs. The helmet has a visor that covers the face with a slotted section at the front so Henry could see and breathe – he must have felt hot and cramped in there! Poking out between the thigh protection is a large, round metal codpiece which has been fascinating Tower visitors for more than 350 years!

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 20: Directions to The White Tower First Floor: The Grand Chamber

### Narrator 1:

Continue to follow the route around to the right for 10 meters, keeping the low barrier on your right.

You will pass through a stone archway to the next room on the route, you are welcome to feel the stones of the Tower as you pass.

Continue straight for 5 meters past a wooden pillar towards more displays containing armour with a low barrier in front of it.

Once you reach this turn left, at 9 o’clock, and walk for approximately 9 meters with the barrier on your right.

If you wish to leave the White Tower here, there will be a member of staff at the end of the display who can show you the way out to the Boardwalk. From the Broadwalk, you can either move on to stop 29 or listen to the rest of the White Tower tracks outside.

If you’re continuing inside, our next stop is one floor up, on the first floor. Remember you can pause the directions along the way. At the end of the railings turn diagonally left, at 11 o’clock, and walk for 6 meters to another stone archway.

Turn slightly left again and walk for another 7 meters to the bottom of four flights of wooden stairs that go back on themselves.

These stairs have a wooden handrail on both sides. There are members of staff at the top of the stairs if you need any guidance.

At the top of the stairs, turn left back on yourself and walk straight for approximately 5 meters following the banister on your left. At the end of this turn diagonally left, at 11 o’clock, and continue for another 5 meters and pass through a stone archway into the Grand Chamber, a large room which opens out on your right. It has freestanding wooden support columns in two rows along the centre of the space and 4 benches, without armrests or backrests, in between these.

Once through the archway, head across the room for approximately 10 meters diagonally right, at 1 o’clock, to a large window. When you’re there, play the next track.

## Stop 21 – White Tower First Floor: The Grand Chamber

SFX: Atmospheric Norman music and fire crackling. The murmur of voices

### Narrator 2:

When the White Tower was first built nearly 1,000 years ago, this grand chamber – a large, hall sized space, was probably used for royal receptions and other big occasions. There are 2 rows of six wooden support columns either side of the central space. The room would have had colourful tapestries hanging up and may have been divided by screens, to make it less draughty.

It was equipped with the latest modern conveniences. There is a small room on your left, at 9 o’clock, which served as an ensuite toilet called a garderobe. It was built into the outer wall so it could empty out into a ditch below. Having a private toilet would have been a real sign of status. Now turnaround with the window behind you, on the far left, at 3 o’clock, is a large, arched fireplace which is roped off. It is built into the wall which was a new innovation as traditionally you would have a central hearth. (This is one of the earliest known wall fireplaces in England.)

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 22: Directions to White Tower First Floor: The Chapel of St John

### Narrator 1:

With the window behind you, follow the room around to the left, at 9 o’clock, keeping the wall on your left. When you reach the far side of the room turn right and continue and keep the wall on your left until you reach a stone archway in the top left corner of the room. There will be obstructions on this route in the form of low-level poles, barriers, and rope.

Go left, and up 2 steps, through the stone archway and into St John’s Chapel. There is a sign asking for quiet in the Chapel and for visitors to remove their hats. When you are in the Chapel, walk straight ahead for approximately 8 meters to the far wall and stop with a large stone column on your left. When you are here play the next track.

## Stop 23: White Tower First Floor: The Chapel of St John

### Narrator 2:

Built as a place of worship for William the Conqueror, the interior architecture is constructed from pale stone. It has a double-height nave with an arching, barrel-vaulted ceiling and a curved gallery and balcony. Below the balcony 14 fat round columns support plain arches with simple carvings of scallop and leaf designs and there is **a paved floor**. The simple altar - which is a Victorian addition - is at the far end of the space beneath an arched window. You can wrap your arms around the column on your left to get a sense of the space. You may be able to feel the Mason marks and graffiti etched into the stone here.

The chapel would have been used by the royal family for worship when they were staying at the Tower but by the 13th century it was used less frequently and became a place to store important government documents.

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 24: Directions to White Tower Second Floor: Jakobs’s Chair

### Narrator 1:

Our next stop is Jakobs’s Chair which is on display on the top floor. Remember you can pause the directions along the way. With the pillar still on your left, turn right, at 3 o’clock, and walk for 2 meters to an archway with a wooden door. Exit through the archway and down a narrow corridor that bends to the right. Please be aware that the floor here slopes downwards and there is a single step down at the end of the corridor. Once out of the corridor move to your left.

You are now in a big chamber with a large display case containing more objects from the Royal Armouries collection in the middle which is flanked by 2 sets of 10 columns on either side of the case. Keep the display case on your left and follow it straight along to the end, for about 15 meters.

If you wish to leave the White Tower here, make your way past a second smaller display case straight ahead of you and go to the end of the room where there will be a member of staff who can show you the way out to the Broadwalk. From the Broadwalk, you can either move on to stop 29 or listen to the rest of the White Tower tracks outside.

If you’re continuing inside to the top floor: at the end of the large display case, turn left to go around it and then turn left back on yourself and walk straight to the end for another 15 meters.

The way up to the top floor is by a spiral staircase with 28 steps. Go up three steps and turn right through a doorway to take the staircase which spirals to the right. There is a partial landing half-way up and metal handrails on the left and a rope handrail on the right. Pause the audio now, and press play again when you reach the top.

At the top of the spiral staircase, don't be tempted to step right and down, into the room. Instead, continue straight along through a narrow, raised corridor for approximately 25 meters. You will pass between narrow stone arches and arches opening out to the room on the right. There are obstructions in the form of radiators and there are open steps on the right-hand side of the corridor.

At the end, after crossing a square glass panel recessed into the floor showing a Norman drain below, turn right to walk down 2 shallow steps without handrails. Jakobs’s chair is on display in a glass case in the room in front of you. Walk straight ahead for 4 metres until you reach the corner of the glass case. Keeping the case on your right walk alongside the case for 3 metres and turn right, and right again. When you’re there play the next track.

## Stop 25 – White Tower Second Floor: Jakobs’s Chair

SFX: Baying crowd, wind blowing.

### Narrator 2:

In this display there are a number of items relating to Prison and Prisoners. Although there were no known purpose-built cells, the Tower’s position close to the centre of government meant that prisoners were held here from soon after it was built. We’re going to concentrate on two items associated with this history; a rifle and a wooden chair with a curved Windsor back.

The rifle is mounted horizontally on top of a waist-high, white display post. Known as a Short Magazine Lee Enfield it became the standard service rifle for the British Armed Forces from its official adoption in 1895 until around 1957. A good infantryman would expect to fire about fifteen aimed shots in a minute using it. This rifle is of the type that was used here at the Tower by a firing squad.

It has a long, straight wooden stock which gently widens, ending in a curved butt that would be held against the soldier’s shoulder. The main action body is made of dark blue steel and holds the firing bolt, the trigger mechanism, and a magazine of cartridges. Attached to the bolt and sticking out on the right side is the bolt handle. To fire the gun, this bolt was lifted and pulled back, expelling the used cartridge, pushing a new bullet into the barrel, and cocking the gun ready for firing.

The magazine held ten cartridges, giving the weapon twice the capacity of the German Mauser. The walnut wood of the rifle is darkened and smoothed with age and use, and the barrel which runs along the top of the weapon is made of blued steel.

On the night of 31 January 1941, the German spy, Josef Jakobs parachuted into England. Injured on landing, he was captured and brought to London for Court Martial. Evidence used against him included a parachute, a portable radio transmitter and a torn-up code wheel. Found guilty, Jakobs was sentenced to death by firing squad. He was executed in the morning of 15 August 1941 in the Tower's small rifle range. Due to the low height of the range's bullet catcher, Jakobs had to be seated. The chair he sat in for his execution is displayed in this case, its curved wooden back splintered and shattered by gunfire.

Jakobs was the Tower's final state prisoner - and the last person executed here.

To hear the directions to the next stop, which is located in the basement, play the next track.

## Stop 26: Directions to White Tower Basement

### Narrator 1:

With the case containing Jakobs’s chair behind you walk forward diagonally at 11 o’clock for 10 meters, passing through a stone archway until you reach two vertically mounted bronze cannons on the stone wall on the left. They were cast in 1638 and are both marked CR for King Charles I.

With the wall and the cannons behind you, there is a 3D model of the whole site of the Tower of London on a large table a couple of steps in front of you. Follow the bronze tabletop to the left to find a tactile map also outlining the whole of the site. In the room beyond the table there is an interactive area which includes some replica masons’ tools. You are welcome to explore the displays in this room until you are ready to leave.

The final stop in the White Tower is in the basement which is accessed by going down a single long spiral staircase. If you do not wish to visit the basement, go back to the staircase you climbed to reach this floor. There will be a member of staff who can assist you to an alternative route to the Broadwalk outside. From the Broadwalk, you can either move on to stop 29 or listen to the basement track outside.

To get to the basement you have to go down a long spiral staircase with two sets of additional smaller flights of stairs at the end. Pause the audio along the way if you need to. With the tactile map behind you, take a couple of steps forward towards the exit which is up a single step with no handrails.

Turn right and pass through a doorway and go up six steps with a metal handrail on the right-hand side before you begin to make your way down the long spiral staircase to the lower ground level. There are handrails on both sides of the spiral staircase, however the right-hand side handrail is not continuous. There are 101 steps of uneven heights and depths and there are also some landings.

At the end of the spiral staircase the landing straightens out and leads to two small flights of stairs. Go through a doorway with a big wooden door with studs on the right-hand side and go down three steps with handrails on the left. Turn right immediately after these steps and go down another four steps. Turn left at the bottom and you have reached the first chamber in the basement where there is also a member of staff who will be happy to offer assistance if you’d like it. Take a few steps to the right and play the next track.

## Stop 27 – White Tower Basement

### Narrator 2:

Over the centuries thousands of weapons were stored down here in the basement and there are cannon balls and artillery in this chamber. The basement also houses the Tower’s execution block and axe, which may have been made up to 400 years ago. There are two displays containing tactile models and braille interpretation in front of you, at 12 o’clock, and about 10 meters into the chamber.

The first one is on the right-hand side in front of a row of canons and shows a canon handle in the shape of a dolphin. The second one is on the left-hand side and slightly further into the chamber and in front of a gilded statue of a winged lion. This tactile displays a crowned Tudor Rose emblem taken from the side of a canon. You are welcome to explore the displays in this room until you are ready to leave.

To hear the directions to the next stop, which is located outside the White Tower, play the next track.

## Stop 28: Directions to Anne Boleyn on Trial

### Narrator 1:

With the display containing the tactile model of a crowned Tudor Rose emblem on your left, continue walking to the end of the chamber, keeping the wall on your left and past two mounted upright cannons. When you reach the wall at the end, turn right, take a couple of steps, and then turn left to pass through a wide doorway into the next chamber. Take a moment to feel the large wooden door on the right-hand side of the doorway. It’s the oldest door in the Tower, dating from the 1200’s, and has an enormous keyhole at around head height.

Pass through a second chamber and go through a door diagonally on your right, at 2 o’clock, to the gift shop. Immediately on your right as you enter the shop is a small tactile display with a replica helmet, gauntlet and metal chain mail that can be touched, accompanied by braille interpretation.

With the tactile display behind you, walk straight ahead for approximately 4 meters and then turn right and walk through the shop for approximately 20 meters to a large, smooth wooden doorway.

Pass through the doorway and go diagonally left, at 10 o’clock, for 3 meters until you reach the bottom of 3 flights of wooden stairs that turn back on themselves. Go up these and remember you can pause the audio until you are there.

At the top of the stairs turn diagonally left, at 10 o’clock, and walk for approximately 8 meters and exit the White Tower through a set of double doors. You will come out onto the Broadwalk on the north side of the White Tower. Pause the audio and head outside.

The next stop is about the Trial of Anne Boleyn and is on the south side of the White Tower, close to the entrance that we came in by. With the White Tower and the exit behind you, turn right and walk along the Boardwalk for 22 meters until you reach the corner of the White Tower and the wooden sentry box. There will be some obstructions in the form of staircases and benches along this route on your right.

Keep walking straight ahead for another 12 meters keeping a low fence on your right-hand side and then turn and follow the fence around to the right.

Walk straight ahead for approximately 75 meters down a sloping path which has an uneven surface. There are obstructions on this route in the form of benches and bins on your right. Stop when you pass a mature tree on your left and a double bench on your right. The huge lawn on the south side of the White Tower opens up on your right behind a low fence.

When you get there, play the next track.

## Stop 29 – Anne Boleyn on Trial

SFX: Bustling life and activity

### Narrator 2:

Hidden beneath the spot to your right is a huge lawn where the remains of a royal palace lie. This area is known as the **inmost ward** and would have contained a bustling complex of buildings that were enclosed, providing security and seclusion from the rest of the castle. But by the 1660’s the palace had fallen out of use, and it was demolished, so we now have to imagine a grand residence with a Great Hall and courtyard. These buildings were the core of the Tudor Palace, repainted and refurbished by Henry VIII for the coronation of his second wife Anne Boleyn in 1533.

The Great Hall was used for royal feasts and entertaining. But it could also be used for more serious business. On the 15th of May 1536, one of the most dramatic events in the Tower’s history happened here – the trial of Anne Boleyn.

For Anne, her arrival at the Tower had a particularly cruel twist: only three years earlier she had made the same journey here to prepare for her coronation. She was even imprisoned in the same luxury apartments that had been especially decorated by her new husband to please her.

Anne was accused of adultery, incest and plotting to murder the King – she denied all charges. After two weeks of imprisonment, she was put on trial and sentenced to execution. But Henry did show Anne one small mercy: he granted her request to be beheaded *by a sword,* rather than an axe. A skilled swordsman was sent from France, and he executed her with a single blow.

### Female Voice [Anne Boleyn]:

I am come hither to accuse no man nor to speak anything of that whereof I am accused and condemned to die - but I pray God save the king and send him long to reign over you … for a gentler nor a more merciful prince was there never and to me was a good and sovereign lord.

[SFX: Beheading]

To hear the directions to the next stop, play the next track.

## Stop 30: Directions to The Ravens

### Narrator 1:

Our final stopping place is the raven enclosures where they are housed at night. The Ravens are used to guide dogs at the Tower, so they are always welcome. With the lawn on your right, walk for 6 meters, keeping the low metal fence then an ivy-covered wall, on your right. There may be benches and bins as obstacles as you go. Turn right and go down a wide set of 13 steps. There are metal handrails on both sides and a central handrail. At the bottom of the steps the Raven shop is immediately on your right if you would like to visit.

Continue walking for 30 meters to a set of 3 steps with handrails on both sides. Go up these and then walk straight on for approximately 10 meters.

There will now be a low metal railing surrounding a lawn to your right. Continue walking straight ahead for 15 meters, keeping the low metal railing on your right as a shoreline if you choose, and you will reach the Raven Enclosure. There are obstructions in the form of benches and bins on your right, along the way. Turn right to face the enclosure and when you’re there, play the next track.

## Stop 31 – The Ravens

SFX: Ravens squawking

### Narrator 2:

Ahead of us on the other side of the railings is a row of four shed-sized wooden bird enclosures. They have wooden partitions and mesh fences. Sometimes a raven may be resting inside one of the enclosures or playing with a toy.

One of the most famous myths about the Tower of London surrounds the ravens that are kept here. Legend says that the kingdom and the Tower will fall if the six resident ravens ever leave the fortress. Ravens are large, beady-eyed, black birds with long beaks sharp enough to tear rabbit flesh. They are the largest members of the corvid, or crow, family with a wingspan of up to one and a half metres. On the other side of the railings is display showing a tactile model, slightly smaller than life, of a raven in flight, from above, to give you an idea of their wingspan.

The Ravens have had one wing slightly clipped so that they can’t fly too far. They are free to roam the site and often interact with visitors - but do not attempt to feed them as they may bite! A specially appointed Yeoman Warder, known as The Ravenmaster, and his team of assistants look after the Tower ravens and feed them twice a day. Ravens are very intelligent birds - they’re curious, playful, and even mischievous.

Once upon a time ravens weren’t the only animals to be seen here. For 600 years there was a royal menagerie at the Tower, with lions, tigers, monkeys and even an elephant.

Nobody knows for sure when ravens first nested at the Tower of London. But every precaution is taken to make sure they don’t disappear. The history of the Tower of London spans almost a thousand years. We hope it will span as many years in the future – with a little help from the ravens.

To hear some final words and direction to the exit, play the next track.

## Stop 32: End of Tour and Directions to Exit

### Narrator 1:

This is the end of our audio-described highlights tour, but you’re very welcome to explore more of the Tower before you go, like the Chapel of St Peter Ad Vincula, or some of the atmospheric towers built into the defensive walls. If you’re interested in tactile exhibits and would like to discover more about the country’s coins being made here for over 500 years, you could visit The Tower’s Mint exhibition. It’s near the shop where you collected your guide. The guide can be returned at the shop, or at the main exit.

If you’re leaving now, turn around to have your back to the raven enclosures and walk for 5 meters towards the stone wall opposite. From there turn left and follow the wall on your right for 15 meters. There are two large, closed archways within this wall.

When you get to the end of the wall turn right and pass through the large open archway. You will emerge onto a cobbled road that runs between the inner and outer curtain walls.

If you would like to visit the toilets before leaving, walk straight onto the cobbled road for 5 meters and then turn left. Walk along the cobbled road for approximately 30 meters and the toilets will be on your right.

Otherwise, to leave the Tower now, cross the cobbled road and go straight through an archway in the outer curtain wall and exit the Tower over a drawbridge onto the wharf. Please note that if you decide to leave here, you cannot get back in.

Don’t forget to return your audio guide before you go, there is a member of staff at the right-hand side of the archway just before the drawbridge who will collect your guide.

We do hope you’ve enjoyed your visit to the Tower of London. Your visit today helps to support Historic Royal Palaces, an independent charity.

## [End of Tour]