



City of Westminster

Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms



Churchill's wartime bunker is a fascinating piece of living history; an underground maze of rooms that once buzzed with round-the-clock planning and plotting, strategies and secrets. As you explore the historic rooms for yourself, you can imagine what life would have been like during the tense days and nights of the Second World War.

You'll begin your journey at the War Cabinet Room, where Churchill and his inner circle plotted the war. See the chair in which Churchill presided over meetings, the scratch marks on the arms bearing witness to the intense pressure he was under at these times.

As you go deeper into the warren of rooms, you'll discover how life and work continued underground, from top-secret conversations between Churchill and Roosevelt in the Transatlantic Telephone Room to more domestic concerns in the Churchills' Kitchen.

In the Map Room, the informational hub of the entire site, everything has remained exactly as it was when the lights were finally switched off on 16 August 1945. The so-called 'beauty chorus' of colour-coded telephones; the books and documents piled on desks; the rationed sugar cubes found in an envelope belonging to Wing Commander John Heagarty; the wartime maps covering the walls, and the thousands of tiny pinholes dotting the progress of Allied ships across the Convoy Map.

Right next door to the Map Room, you'll find Churchill's Room, an office-bedroom boasting the most comfortable living conditions within the bunker. Churchill only slept overnight in this room on three occasions, but he did make four of his wartime speeches from the desk here, including his 11 September 1940 speech warning of Hitler's plan to wage a war of terror against the United Kingdom.

What to See

Undercover: Life in Churchill's Bunker



'Enjoy is not really the word. One was completely inspired when working with him, and one felt that one was in the centre of everything and exceedingly privileged to be there. I was not the only one, but I'm speaking now as a person; I personally...

The Churchill Museum



Uncover the man behind the image at the Churchill Museum, the only major museum in the world dedicated to the life and legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. Using cutting-edge technology and multimedia displays, Churchill's story is brought to life,...

The Cabinet War Rooms



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MapRoom



Visitor information

Open daily 9.30am - 6pm

Last admission 5pm

Closed 24, 25 and 26 December

Buy Tickets

Admission Prices from 1 January 2012

Price includes a voluntary donation* and free audio guide

Adults £16.50

Child (under 16) Free

Concessions £13.20 (Senior, Student, Disabled)

IWM Friends Free

Buy tickets in advance online

*Churchill War Rooms is part of Imperial War Museums, which is a registered charity.

Your ticket price includes a voluntary donation. By making a donation, you will be making a valuable contribution to the care and conservation of this historic site. And, if you are a UK tax payer, your donation will enable us to claim Gift Aid on your entire admission payment.

Eating and Drinking

The fully licensed Switch Room Café is a great place to relax and enjoy traditionally British food & drink during a visit to the Churchill War Rooms.

A delicious range of dishes cooked on site by our in house chefs using fresh, seasonal ingredients. The daily menu includes British classics, fresh sandwiches and home baked cakes.

Our Baristas will make you a great fair-trade coffee using a traditional espresso machine or choose from a selection of teas and soft drinks.

The Switch Room Café is open daily from 10am to 5pm. Hot food is served until 3pm.

Down in the bunker where Prime Minister Winston Churchill, his cabinet and generals met during WWII, £6 million has been spent on a huge exhibition devoted to 'the greatest Briton'. This whizz-bang multimedia Churchill Museum joins the highly evocative Cabinet War Rooms, where chiefs of staff slept, ate and plotted Hitler's downfall, blissfully believing they were protected from Luftwaffe bombs by the 3m slab of concrete overhead. (Turns out it would have crumpled like paper had the area taken a hit.) Together, these two sections make you forget the Churchill who was a maverick and lousy peacetime politician, and drive home how much the cigar-chewing, wartime PM was a case of right man, right time. The Churchill Museum contains all sorts of posters, trivia and personal effects, from the man's cigars to a 'British bulldog' vase in his image, and from his formal Privy Council uniform to his shockingly tasteless red velvet 'romper' outfit. Even though the museum doesn't shy away from its hero's fallibilities, it does begin with his strongest suit – his stirring speeches, replayed for each goosebumped visitor who steps in front of the screen.

'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat', 'We will fight them on the beaches',

'Never in the course of human history has so much been owed by so many to so few'.

Elsewhere, silver-tongued Winnie even gets credit for inspiring Orson Welles' famous rant about Switzerland and cuckoo clocks, with a speech he made to Parliament several years before *The Third Man* was filmed. There's fantastically edited footage of Churchill's 1965 state funeral, making the April 2005 burial of Pope John Paul II look like a low-key family affair, and you can check on what the PM was doing nearly every day beforehand via the huge tabletop interactive lifeline. Touch on a particular year on the screen and it will open up into months and days for you to choose. In stark contrast, the old Cabinet War Rooms have been left much as they were when the lights were turned off on VJ Day in August 1945 and everyone headed off for a well-earned drink. The room where the Cabinet held more than 100 meetings, the Telegraph Room with a hotline to Roosevelt, the cramped typing pool, the converted broom cupboard that was Churchill's office and scores of bedrooms have all been preserved. You will pass the broadcast niche where Churchill made four of his rousing speeches to the nation, including one about Germany fuelling 'a fire in British hearts' by launching the London Blitz. In the Chief of Staff's Conference Room, the walls are covered with huge, original maps that were only discovered in 2002. If you squint two-thirds of the way down the right wall, somebody (Churchill himself?) drew a little doodle depicting a cross-eyed and bandy-legged Hitler knocked on his arse. The free audioguide is very informative and entertaining and features plenty of anecdotes, including some from people who worked here in the nerve centre of Britain's war effort – and weren't even allowed by their irritable boss to relieve the tension by whistling.