

THE ROUTE

The Regent's Canal, linking Little Venice to the Thames at Limehouse, was first opened in 1820, providing an important transport route and centre of industrial activity. Today, with its unique architecture, industrial archeology, scenery and wildlife, the canal provides a peaceful haven through central London.

LITTLE VENICE is a delightful pool (forming the junction of the Regent's Canal and the Grand Union Canal), surrounded by the 18th century elegance of the Nash houses, with their white stucco facades a striking frame for the trees and colourful gardens. In the centre of the pool at Little Venice is the tiny tree-covered **Browning's Island**, named after the poet, who lived nearby. The canal then runs between an avenue of trees to the 272-yard long **Maida Hill Tunnel** and into the Park.

REGENT'S PARK occupies the site of the earlier Marylebone Pleasure Gardens, and was landscaped by **John Nash** for the Prince Regent, first opening to the public in 1838. The canal is in a beautiful leafy cutting on the northern fringe of the 410-acre Park — there is no finer stretch of urban waterway in the country. The second bridge in the Park is **Macclesfield Bridge**, known as "**Blow-up Bridge**". On 2nd October 1874, a barge carrying five tons of gunpowder exploded under the bridge with devastating results — the explosion was heard all over London.

LONDON ZOO first opened in 1828, and its 36 acres (in the north-east corner of the Park) now contain some 8,500 animals, birds, reptiles and fish. The antelope terraces can be seen from the canal, as can the **Aviary**, designed by **Lord Snowdon** and built in 1965. It is a unique structure, soaring above the canal, all angles and corners, filled with trees, waterfalls and, of course, birds of all kinds. The London Waterbus Company has its own landing stage at the Zoo, which means that passengers going into the Zoo not only have a reduced ticket price, but avoid any queues at the main gate. **Camden Town** is reached by a sharp left turn at **Cumberland Basin**, with which there is an immediate change of landscape. The greenery of the Park gives way to elegant town houses with charming gardens backing on to the water.

CAMDEN LOCK, with its attractive roving bridge and double lock gates, is a site of enormous charm and historical interest. A delightful collection of craft workshops and studios is set in the converted stables and Victorian warehouses clustered around the cobbled and flagged courtyards, with two restaurants, a dancehall and one of London's most famous weekend markets making up a unique and unspoilt "village" only 10 minutes from the West End. (For special trips and charters, the waterbuses travel east of Camden, through the 12 locks which take the canal down to the Thames at Limehouse.)

LONDON WATERBUS COMPANY

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