



Laugh in LONDON

From Shakespeare's comedic plays and Oscar Wilde's social parodies, to modern day gigs in pubs, clubs and theatres, London is recognised the world over for its comedy. In fact, it's never been better. Here are some of the best ways to experience it.

Comedy Clubs

the comedy store

Perhaps a predictable contender, but you can't underestimate the power of consistency. Established in 1979, The Comedy Store, named after The Comedy Store club in the United States, has become the club to aspire to. Over its almost 40 year life, the Soho venue has seen the likes of Jo Brand, French and Saunders, Ruby Wax and Josie Lawrence, who is currently a regular in The Comedy Store Players line up, pass through its doors. Shows run pretty much every night of the week and last for approximately 2 hours, including the interval. They serve burgers, pizzas and kebabs, have an extensive drinks list and even sell their own merchandise. T-shirt, anyone? 1a, Oxendon Street, SW1Y 4EE.



SOHO theatre

If you're in the market for exciting, innovative comedy, Soho Theatre is the venue to venture down to. Their programme crosses comedy, cabaret, theatre and writers' events. The building houses a 150-seat theatre, 90-seat Soho Upstairs and a cabaret space, Soho Downstairs. When you go is up to you, as there is a show

most nights of the week. You can often find big-name comics testing out new material. Memberships are available entitling you to 10% off drinks at the bar, £10 off your first ticket purchase, advance notice of shows and more for £25 a year. It's like Soho House, only funnier and without the bedrooms...or rooftop pool. 21 Dean Street, Soho, W1D 3NE.

HEN AND CHICKENS

This theatre bar in Islington is the place to go if you are looking to see previews of Edinburgh Fringe Festival material. It is an intimate venue that hosts a mixture of up-and-coming acts and veteran performers, such as Jimmy Carr, Russell Brand and The Mighty Boosh duo. Shows featured are selected for their fun, relevance and humour. 109 St Paul's Road, N1 2NA.

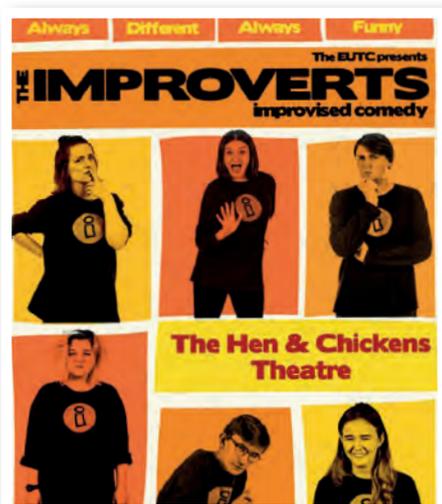


the 99 club

The 99 Club has won the Chortle Award for Best Comedy Club London for six years in a row and has played host to almost all leading comedians working today. There are three venues: Piccadilly Circus, Covent Garden and Leicester Square – its flagship club. If you're worried about being picked on, you're safe here. They don't book acts who use audience members as a comedy punch bag, so you can leave with your self-esteem at the level it was when you arrived. The 99 Club offers packages like the 'All In', comprising of a two-course meal, prosecco, comedy show and nightclub entrance, if you're in the mood for dancing after.

BANANA CABARET

Banana Cabaret Comedy Club is situated inside The Bedford pub in Balham. With the interior looking like a Medieval hang out minus the giant disco ball, you almost expect a couple of Romans to come charging through on their horses. Instead, a plethora of famous faces including Catherine Tate, Eddie Izzard and Al Murray have charged on stage at the Shakespearean Globe Theatre and Ballroom and made audiences chuckle for over 30 years. If the walls could talk they'd have a lot of jokes to tell. Branded as one of the best comedy nights in London,



doors open at 7:30pm on a Friday and Saturday, and shows start at 9pm. The Bedford, 77 Bedford Hill, Balham, SW12 9HD.

angel comedy

Long queues form outside this club, and rightly so. Shows run seven nights a week, with Friday and Saturday being the best for seeing rising stars and a few professional comics, and entry is free. Yes, free – but donations are appreciated. If you're worried about people just turning up for a cheap night out, don't be. The folks are very serious about their comedy. Camden Head, 2 Camden Walk, N1 8DY.

TV Comedy Performances

Going to gigs isn't the only way to experience live comedy. TV panel shows like: Mock The Week and Would I Lie To You and chat shows like: The Graham Norton Show and The Jonathan Ross Show require an audience to cheer, groan and laugh. Websites such as applausestore.com and sroaudiences.com offer free tickets, but it's the luck of the draw, and even if you get on the list, you're not guaranteed



to get in. They give out more tickets than seats to account for no-shows, so you have to get there early and queue.

Plays

London's West End isn't made up entirely of musicals. There are plenty of productions guaranteed to make you giggle. The Play That Goes Wrong and The Comedy About A Bank Robbery are running until late 2018, but book in advance as tickets sell out fast. One definitely not to be missed is Company – a gender-reversed production, showing from September 2018 – December 2018. Broadway legend Patti LuPone is returning to London for this Stephen Sondheim and George Furth show, in which she plays Joanne. Directed by Marianne Elliot.

Comedy Podcasts

There are a few podcasts that also offer the chance to sit in the audience during the recording, like Pappy's Flatshare Slamdown and Do The Right Thing. Find tickets online throughout the year as times and locations vary. These shows tend to have a significantly smaller audience, which is ideal if you want a more intimate comedy experience. However, fewer people means more of a chance to be singled out and picked on. With these, we can't promise you won't be.

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