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# Days out with the kids: exploring London's museums

Some of us tend to start a new year with fresh resolutions and a long list of goals to achieve. Then by the beginning of February, we tend to slip and come March it's game over. The trick to achieving your goals is to combine them, so hear me out. Let's say that your goals are something along the lines of: enjoying the extraordinary amount of culture that we have on our doorstep in London, meeting friends more often, and introducing your kids to more cultural activities – in other words, keeping them away from the Xbox/Facebook/Instagram (delete as appropriate). So here we come! What about organising monthly trips to a museum with your children and meeting friends there for a catch up? It's a win-win isn't it? Here are some of my suggestions:

## Victoria & Albert (V&A) Museum

Your fashion enthusiastic children and friends will find hard to say no to spending the afternoon or evening attending the Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams exhibition. Two words: haute couture. You might want to book tickets for this one as soon as possible, and perhaps dressing up to make it even more fun, say a red lipstick or the scarf you keep for special events and then you are ready to play the part.

But if you are taking adventurers – from five to 12 years old – then what about discovering curious ceramic objects, architectural curiosities and going on a trip to find animals. You can show up on the day and, at no extra cost, borrow a backpack from the mu-

seum with all the material needed to embark on an exciting adventure. Let the children be the leaders, just give them a compass to navigate their way through the museum – or to pretend to – and follow your little explorers.

In addition to the backpack, you could, should you wish, provide your children with a sketchpad so they can draw something they find interesting. They can also glue their entrance ticket to it – and start a collection – or write down what they liked about the experience.

The V&A Garden Cafe caters delicious pick-me-ups for afterwards for both children and adults.



© Victoria and Albert Museum



© National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

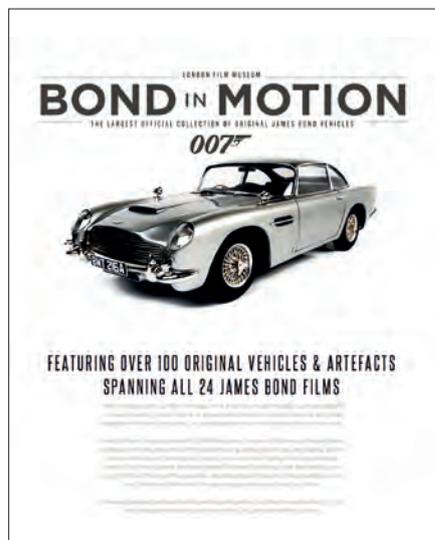
## Charles Dickens Museum

*Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, David Copperfield...* even if you are not a Charles Dickens fan, I am sure some of the above books are included in your children's school curriculum.

However, if reading is not your thing then you can always rent a Charles Dickens movie, *Great Expectations* for example, to get in the mood. What better time than now to ask a willing mother, father, sister, brother-in-law or even godparents to take your offspring to visit this very interesting museum. You can always promise them a glass of red wine, or two, when they return your children home after the visit. The museum offers family activity trails, audio guides and a dress-up costume box. And isn't it wonderful that in this instance you are ticking yet another box of your 2019 goals: to practise delegating.

## HMS Belfast

Put your hand up if, despite living in London, you have never made it close to the famous River Thames. Well now you can, and I can assure you that you will enjoy it very much. Think of taking your adventurous children into a real warship moored on the Thames and exploring its nine decks. Just being on a boat is such a fun experience! And the views of London from the river, especially towards the Tower of London, are breath-taking. You might want to leave your high heels at home for this one, though. Once you have finished, head to the many restaurants at Hays Galleria nearby or Jamie's Italian at London Bridge.



## National Maritime Museum

The fun part of visiting this museum starts early as you can take a boat to get there. Yes, you can in fact travel to Greenwich by boat – rather than by tube. Once you arrive at the museum, your kids will love 'travelling' to the world largest oceans, learning about Arctic and Antarctic exploration. But if for any reason it all fails, don't worry because the Peter Harrison Planetarium will save the day. The planetarium is irresistible for children and perfect for adults to put their feet up, or even snooze for five minutes! If your children have any energy left then take them, and their scooters, to Greenwich Park. I promise you that after such an adventure everybody will sleep like a log that night.

## London Film Museum

And last but not least, let's think of the film and car lovers shall we? This museum is certainly one for adults to enjoy with the children. Bond in Motion is the largest official collection of original James Bond vehicles. The exhibition features over one hundred original vehicles and artefacts spanning 24 James Bond films. I bet families will be thrilled to enjoy and share this experience together. And in return, you will, no doubt, be happy to hear and exchange stories afterwards over a burger at Byron that is located just a minute away.

As per most things in life, it's all about planning so don't leave it for later. Simply add any of the above fun times to yours, your friends' and in-laws' calendars now.

And well done you for ticking three resolutions at once!

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moved from Spain to London 14 years ago. She qualified as a solicitor of England and Wales. She currently lives in London with her husband and daughter after having previously lived and worked in Trier, Germany and San Francisco. Cristina is on maternity leave from her job at an investment bank awaiting the new member of the family to arrive.