

The four and a half hour train journey to London felt like nothing at all after the long flights we had. We had thought about flying but decided that the total journey time would be faster by train as it got us straight to the centre of London. We arrived at Kings Cross station and crossed London by tube, feeling like we were part of a giant monopoly game. The kids did really well dealing with their own luggage on and off tube trains and up escalators. I wouldn't have been brave enough to attempt suitcases on the tube if it had been rush hour, but it was fine at 2pm. Our hotel is only a few hundred metres from Waterloo and right next to The London Eye. In the photo below, our hotel is in the building to the left of the wheel (the County Hall Building). We are staying in another Premier Inn. It's not cheap, but it's cheap for London and amazing value. It's very clean and comfortable, and surprisingly the room is more spacious than the Premier Inn we stayed in at Inverness. It's definitely a world away from some of the grotty hotels we stayed in when we first came to London in 1993.



After finding our room and dumping our luggage, we were all desperate to explore London. Thursday was the only day while we are here that Tower Bridge was being lifted, so we headed down to Tower Hill on the tube. The kids are taking turns to navigate the tube and they are quickly getting the hang of it. They just love the enormous escalators and all the

connecting tunnels. For me it's like time warp back to the 1990s when we spent nearly 4 years in this amazing city. It's so exciting to be back and so far we haven't got lost, even though we have no map. There was time to do the Tower Bridge experience before the bridge lifted at 4:45pm. The views from the top of the bridge weren't great as it was a typically grey London day, but it was fun anyway. The kids did an Olympic challenge which involved answering some questions and a couple of games, then collecting their medals at the end. It's fun being in London with the build up to the Olympics. After the bridge lift we toured the old engine room which was in use until 1976.



We braved the tube in rush hour and made it to Covent Garden without being trampled. The

kids finally got to experience the London crowds we have been telling them about. After a quick dinner at Maxwells in Covent Garden, I was dragged into the nearby Apple store by two very excited kids. I had to limit their time or we would have been in there all night. Walked through Leicester Square and another shop raised the excitement levels another notch - an M&M store! Talk about a kid in a candy store, well this was one whopping big candy store. Four levels dedicated to all things M&M related. The only way I got them out of there was by promising we would go back! Our last stop before heading to bed was the bright lights of Piccadilly Circus. The kids were totally hyped when we got to bed, but they did eventually fall asleep.

