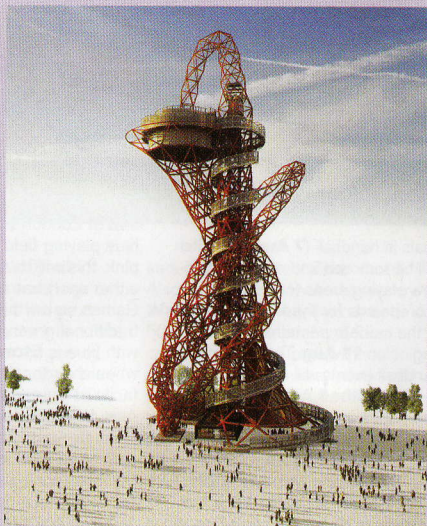


To learn more about the venues, as well as plenty of fascinating facts about the history of the Games, why not book onto one of these excellent London tours? (Please note that the tours do not include entry to the Olympic venues).

The *Olympics Walk*, a two-hour tour of the area around the Olympics Park, takes place at 10.45 and 14.15 every day (except 27 Jul-12 Aug). It's organised by **London Walks** (p. 76), the capital's oldest walking tour company. London's famous **Blue Badge Tourist Guides** also offer several excellent Olympic tours, including *Daily Olympics Walks* around the edge of the Olympic Park for great views of the venues. The route finishes at Westfield Stratford City (p. 96) where there's a special viewing platform overlooking the Olympic Park (Tickets £9, child free. toursof2012sites.com).

For a self-guided Olympic tour, take a stroll along the **Queen's Jubilee Greenway**. Marked with distinctive glass slabs, the path links many London 2012 Games venues. Along its 60km route, it passes the North Greenwich Arena/The O₂, which is hosting the gymnastics and trampoline events, Hyde Park where the 10km open-water swim will take place in the Serpentine, and Greenwich Park which will be the venue for equestrian and modern pentathlon events. For a bird's-eye view of North Greenwich Arena/The O₂ and the surrounding area, visitors can take a walk on the arena's roof (Tickets £22. theo2.co.uk/upattheo2).

If a walking tour sounds too much like hard work, hop on a tour bus. **Big Bus Tours** (p. 74) and **The Original Tour** (p. 74) buses will both take you past Horse Guards Parade, where beach volleyball will be taking place, and Hyde Park, site of some triathlon and swimming events. The *Classic Sightseeing Tour from London Duck Tours* (p. 74) also goes past the area. Expect diversions during the Olympic road cycling and marathon.



The Orbit

Those lucky enough to get tickets to the Olympic Park (Tickets £10, child £5. london2012.com) can view it in all its glory from the ArcelorMittal Orbit. This 114.5m steel structure, designed by artist Anish Kapoor and architect Cecil Balmond, is the tallest sculpture in the UK. On a clear day, visitors to the viewing platform can see for more than 20 miles across the capital. A trip to the top takes around half an hour, including a lift ascent, time on the viewing platform, and descending via the steps (Tickets £15, child £7. The Orbit is closed to visitors from 13 Aug. tickets.london2012.com).

OLYMPIC FACT: The Beijing Olympics began at 8.08pm on 8/8/08 as the number 8 is lucky in China