

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 into the Olympic and Paralympic venues themselves.

The *Olympics Walk*, a two-hour tour of the area around the Olympic Park, takes place until 28 Aug and from 10 Sep. It's organised by **London Walks** (p. 69), 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. 86), where there's a special viewing platform overlooking the Olympic Park (tickets £9, child free. tours.of2012sites.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, which is hosting some of the wheelchair basketball events, and Greenwich Park – which will be the venue for equestrian events. You can also cycle much of the route, so why not hire a bike with Barclays Cycle Hire (p. 136). 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 with **Up At The O2** (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. 67) and **The Original Tour** (p. 67) buses will both take you past The Mall, where the Paralympic marathon will be taking place on **9 Sep**. Make sure you choose the tours with a live guide for up-to-the-minute information about the London 2012 Games. The *Classic Sightseeing Tour* from **London Duck Tours** (p. 74) also goes past the area. Expect diversions during the marathon event.



The Orbit

Those with tickets to the Olympic Park (tickets £10, child £5. london2012.com) can view it in all its glory by booking tickets for 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. tickets.london2012.com).