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The city of London is one of the most recognisable film sets in the world, having often starred in many great films from romantic comedies and period dramas to action adventures and sci-fi thrillers. If you're a film buff and are searching for free things to do in London, follow the footsteps of famous actors from past and present and spend a day discovering these iconic film locations

The intimidatingly grand Somerset House in the Strand has appeared in many movies, as both a British and foreign setting. To name just a few, it appears in The Duchess, Sherlock Holmes, Shanghai Nights, Pride and Prejudice and Sleepy Hollow as well as two James Bond films. The courtyard of the imposing building played the role of St Petersburg in GoldenEye and Somerset House would later play the Ministry of Defence in Tomorrow Never Dies.

The famous road junction, Piccadilly Circus in Soho was the climatic end to An American Werewolf in London was shot. Over two nights, the area was shut down to allow for the rampage between beast and the London traffic. The most recognisable feature of Piccadilly Circus, having appeared in many movies is the massive electronic billboards that actually curve around the building.

In 2005, Whitehall was transformed for the largest location shoot London had seen for years, for the epic finale in the Hollywood adaptation of the comic book classic V for Vendetta. The area from Trafalgar Square and Whitehall, up to Parliament and Big Ben were closed for 3 nights from midnight to 5am as tanks and hundreds of troops and masked revolutionaries descended on Whitehall, the heart of the British Government.

Notting Hill has played a role in many movies, however the most famous is undoubtedly the romantic comedy of the same name, Notting Hill. The Portobello Road street market is perhaps the most recognisable setting from the movie but if you do your research you can also discover a tattoo shop, the secret gardens, Max and Bella's flats and Toni's failed restaurant nearby. A favourite for Notting Hill fans, 280 Westbourne Park Road was the home address for Hugh Grant's character, William Thacker. Sadly, the iconic blue front door from the movie was actually removed and auctioned off and has been replaced with a dull in comparison black door.

If you were in the thick of the Harry Potter craze, then you can base a whole day around seeking out the London locations used in the blockbuster films. Head to King's Cross Station and find Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ between platforms 9 and 10, where you can pose with a trolley as it magically disappears into the wall. Head to Australia House in the Strand, the setting for Gringotts Wizarding Bank, or wander through Leadenhall Market, which played the fictional Diagon Alley.

There are also plenty of hotels in London that have played roles in the movies. The Hyde Park Hilton doubled as the old Coburg Hotel in Hitchcock's Frenzy. The Royal Lancaster Hotel makes an appearance in the original Italian Job. The Savoy Hotel and the Ritz both made appearances in Notting Hill and The Park Lane hotel has been used in many films including Brideshead Revisited, Mona Lisa and Gangster No.1.

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