



ANDY BUTLER LMPA

## Premier Inn London County Hall

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word budget hotel in London?

Cramped rooms, paint peeling off the walls, worn-out sheets and a distant location, probably an hour away from the city centre. Now picture this: a big room, fresh paint, clean sheets and comforters and the window framing landmarks like Westminster Bridge, Big Ben or the London Eye. Sounds impossible? Not if you are staying at Premier Inn London County Hall. Part of this historic building, which was once the headquarters of the London County Council, is now home to the hotel owned by UK's largest budget chain—Premier Inn.

Lugging my bags, I walk into an uncluttered lobby with self check-in kiosks and a Costa Coffee machine. There is just a single counter for check-in that is operational 24 hours.

### ROOMS

Then comes the surprise. I am expecting a small room with a bed

against the wall and just enough space to walk till the bathroom. But it is spacious with a comfortable looking bed and lounge. The bathroom is small, but clean, with a liquid soap dispenser. But what I really enjoy is the view of Westminster Bridge from my window.

One of the most interesting features of this hotel is the 'Good Night Guarantee'. If someone does not get a sound sleep, Premier Inn will return the money. So if you spend the night tossing or turning, disturbed by noise, light, or an uncomfortable bed, you can claim back the room charges. But I wake up feeling absolutely refreshed.

### DINING

I walk in for the buffet breakfast at Thyme, the multi-cuisine restaurant, expecting just decently done eggs, cereal and coffee, as in most budget hotels, but I am surprised by the sheer variety. From an assortment of cereals, yogurts, fresh fruits, freshly baked crisp croissants, sausages,

The hotel is next to the London Eye

baked beans, hash browns to eggs, it is quite a spread. But one has to pay separately for the breakfast; it is not included in the room cost.

For meals, the Thyme restaurant serves a mix of cuisines, from English favourites like fish and chips, steaks, grills, pasta to pizzas. Interestingly, each dish comes along with information of the number of calories you are about to swallow. I decide to ignore it. I am here for a brief three days and am in no mood to watch my weight. I try the fish that is the special for the day, and it is delicious.

### AT A GLANCE

**WHAT:** A budget hotel in Central London  
**WHERE:** Belvedere Road; tel: +44 0871 527 8648; www.premierinn.com  
**COST:** Rooms start at £99, but if you book online in advance, you can get a good deal.  
**VERDICT:** Great value for money with an excellent location.

### LOCATION

Each morning I step out to explore Central London. With London Eye and Big Ben just a one-minute walk, and Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly about 20 minutes away, for me the location is the winning feature of this hotel.

—PALLAVI PASRICHA