

HARRY POTTER PLACES
BOOK ONE

Harry Potter
WB Studio Tour Day
Itinerary
Planning Guide



www.HarryPotterPlaces.com

Harry Potter Places Book One

Harry Potter WB Studio Tour Day Itinerary

Planning Supplementum

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A lot has changed since the 2012 opening of **Warner Brothers Studio Tour London—The Making of Harry Potter** [aka, the **Harry Potter WB Studio Tour (HPST)**]. When the *2nd edition* of *Harry Potter Places Book One—London and London Side-Along Apparations* is published (? 2015), this supplementum will no longer be needed. For Potterites with the 1st edition HPP Book, we've included recent updates here.

🧐 The HPST is classified as a **London Side-Along Apparation** because it is located *outside* London Travelcard Zones. Read the **Site #27** chapter to learn about this attraction's history, exhibits, opening hours, and ticket schemes.

Planning Your HPST Day Itinerary

A minimum of 6 hours are required to visit the Harry Potter WB Studio Tour.

This includes travel time between Central London and the HPST, 3 1/2 hours within the Studio Tour, and 1 hour to shop. Thus, the HPST must have its very own itinerary day, even for casual Harry Potter fans.

Determined Potterites can include visits to one or two other Potter Places on their HPST itinerary day. Below are our suggestions.

🧐 The Knight Bus Pickup Playground (Site #22)

If you travel to the HPST via public transportation or rental car (rather than booking a London coach package), add another hour to your itinerary so that you can walk across Gadeside Roundabout from the Studio Tour's entrance and snap pix within the private Muggle neighborhood where *Prisoner of Azkaban* filming occurred. Scenes of Harry dragging his trunk through the streets to a playground, and being picked up by the Knight Bus, were shot here.

🧐 **Please Note:** The Knight Bus Pickup Playground is a **Skip-It** rated site if not visited on an HPST itinerary day. The film sites here simply aren't Potterlicious enough to warrant an independent journey all the way to Watford to see them.

🧐 The *DHp1* Café-Related Film Sites (Site #2)

Located in London's **Piccadilly Circus** area, these sites can be visited conveniently at the end of any London-based HPST day itinerary. Being exterior film sites, these places have no operation hours. However, the best time to visit this area is between 1pm and 7pm on Thursdays through Sundays, when the **Crest of London Bear** is available for Potter pic-taking.




<http://www.crestoflondon.co.uk/crest-bear/>

Potterites who visit the *DHp1* Café-Related Film Sites on the evening of an HPST itinerary day may replace the Piccadilly Circus visit scheduled on our suggested **London** Potter itineraries by:

(1) Adding extra time to your **Muggle Underground Station (Site #13)** visit, and walking *outside* Westminster Tube Station to snap pix of **Big Ben**, the **Houses of Parliament**, and **Westminster Abbey**—or visiting the **London Film Museum (Site #13A)**

- (2) Moving all subsequent sites to the Site #2 timeslot and adding some other Potter or Non-Potter site at the end of your day
- (3) Increasing the amount of time spent at all other sites on that itinerary

Reaching the Harry Potter WB Studio Tour

-  Visit the HPST via public transportation while lodging in London
-  Book a London Coach Company HPST package while lodging in London
-  Make the HPST your first stop after picking up a rental car to travel *outside* of London

Public Transportation from London

Step One:

Use the Transport for London (TfL) and National Rail System Websites

 <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>

 <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

From your London lodgings, use the TfL to plot your underground route to **Euston Railway Station** [EUS]. There, buy a National Rail System ticket to **Watford Junction Railway Station** [WFJ].

Although WFJ is located *outside* the **London Travelcard Zones**, **Oyster cards** are accepted at both EUS and WFJ.

EUS to WFJ is approximately a **20 minute direct trip**—no train changes.

In 2014, the Return (round trip) train fare between EUS and WFJ ranged from £16.20 (\$27) if departing London before 9am, to £10.20 (\$17) if departing London after 9am.

It is important to arrive at WFJ railway station no less than **45 minutes** before your entry timeslot to allow for time to board the next WB Shuttle Bus and reach the HPST at least **20 minutes** prior to your timeslot.

It also is important to perform a **pre-trip transport times check** a week before your visit date. If there are maintenance delays on the TfL or National Rail routes between your London lodgings and EUS, or EUS and WFJ, your HPST travel schedule may need to be adjusted.

Step Two: the WB Studio Tour Shuttle Bus

Warner Bros. has partnered with the **Mullany's Buses** company to provide a special Shuttle Bus between the WFJ railway station and the HPST. A WB Shuttle Bus leaves WFJ at 15-30 minute intervals throughout the day, and requires approximately 15 minutes of one-way travel time.

<http://www.mullanysbuses.com/officialharrypottertourbus.php>



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After exiting the WFJ station, turn **left** and head to **Bus Stop 3**. (Just look for the Harry Potter busses—you can't miss them!) Have your HPST ticket or Email booking confirmation handy when boarding, and purchase your bus ticket from the driver. The HPST Shuttle Bus WFJ Return fare is £2 (\$3).

Harry Potter WB Studio Tour London Coach Company Packages

When it opened in 2012, Warner Bros. partnered with **Golden Tours** (a **Gray Line** bus company) to offer packages that include HPST timeslot entry tickets and provide bus transportation between London and the HPST.

<http://www.goldentours.com/warner-bros-harry-potter-studio-tour-london>

Since then, however, other London coach companies have negotiated similar ticket and transportation packages. While Golden Tours is *probably* your best bet, Google "**London Warner Bros Harry Potter tour coach packages**" to explore other options available for the date of your visit. Below are links to a *few* other London coach companies offering HPST ticket and transportation packages in July of 2014.

- **Coach Holidays**
http://www.coachholidays.com/harry_potter.phtml
- **Evan Evans Tours**
<http://www.evanevantours.co.uk/harry-potter-express.htm>
- **Premium London Tours**
<http://www.premiuntours.co.uk/tours/tour/the-making-of-harry-potter.id294.html>
- **Viator Tour Packages**
<http://www.viator.com/tours/London/Warner-Bros-Studio-Tour-London-The-Making-of-Harry-Potter/d737-5461POTTERSTUDIO>
- **Virgin Experience Days**
[The link below leads to only one of *several* HPST package tour options offered by Virgin]
<http://www.virginexperiencedays.co.uk/warner-bros-studio-tour-london-the-making-of-harry-potter-with-return-transportation-for-one-adult>

Each London coach company leaves from a different London location. Some offer several departure locations for you to choose from, allowing you to pick the departure point closest to your London lodgings.

Drawbacks to ALL London Coach Company HPST Packages:

- Discounted Family HPST Tickets and Complete Studio Tour HPST Tickets are not available if you book a London coach package.
- You'll not have time to visit the Knight Bus Pickup Playground (Site #22).
Granted, it isn't an important Side-Along Apparation site. Still, it is an additional drawback to booking a London Coach Company HPST package.
- **If you use a London coach package to travel to the HPST, the time you are allowed at the HPST is strictly limited to 3 1/2 hours, which *includes* time spent in the shop or café!** Clearly, avid Potterites should *not* book a London coach package.

🚗 Drive to the Harry Potter Warner Bros. Studio Tour

Potterites who will be traveling *outside* of London by car have a marvelous opportunity to make the Harry Potter WB Studio Tour their first driving destination. In addition to enjoying *unlimited* time within the HPST, Potterites who drive here also will have plenty of time to visit the Knight Bus Pickup Playground (Site #22) before heading to your first outside-London destination.

HPST SatNav/GPS Coordinates: Leavesden Aerodrome, Watford WD25 7BZ, UK

The address above identifies the Harry Potter WB Studio Tour car park entrance. The "closed" note seen on Google maps refers to the old **Airport**—not the road.

Brief written directions for driving to the HPST are offered on the Warner Bros. Studio Tour website. However, the SatNav/GPS postal code WB provides will *not* guide you to the car park entrance. It identifies a location far north of the roundabout that leads to the HPST car park entrance. <http://www.wbstudiotour.co.uk/your-visit/getting-here>

The HPST Visitor Car Park offers **598 FREE parking spaces**. Have your HPST ticket or Email booking confirmation handy when you arrive at the car park gate.

If Driving to the HPST, Plan Your HPST Day Itinerary by Scheduling Plenty of Time to Pickup Your Rental Car Before Buying Your HPST Timeslot Ticket:

(1) First, determine how long it takes to travel between your London lodgings and the UK airport associated with your rental car company—the airport you'll be using to visit the UK. Then, set your London lodgings morning departure time to the earliest time you can tolerate.

Please Note: If you'll be renting a car to travel outside of London *before* visiting London Potter Places, use your UK airport *arrival* time to establish a time to start planning your HPST itinerary day. It's probably best to add 1 hour to your arrival time to allow for retrieving your luggage before heading to the rental car company's location.

If you'll be spending a few days in London **before and after** your outside-London Potter trek, rent a car *in* London. Use that location to plan the start of your HPST day itinerary, and skip step 2 below.

- (2) Contact the rental car company and ask **where** to catch their airport shuttle bus, **how often** it runs, and **how long it takes** to reach the car rental site from the airport. Then make an appointment to pick up your rental car.
- (3) Allow at least **45 minutes** for renting and inspecting the car.
- (4) Allow for the approximate travel time between the car rental site and the HPST.
- (5) Add at least **30 minutes** to that time to allow for parking and walking to the ticket window, ensuring that you'll arrive at the entry queue at least **20 minutes** before your entry timeslot ticket.
- (6) THEN determine the **HPST entry timeslot ticket** you'll purchase.

Approximate Travel Time Between Airport Car Rental Sites and the HPST

- **Heathrow Airport:** 30 minutes.
- **Gatwick Airport:** 75 minutes.
- **Stansted Airport:** 60 minutes.
- **Luton Airport:** 30 minutes.

Clearly, driving Potterites who purchase one of the *best* HPST entry timeslot tickets (9am, 9:30am, 10am) will have a very early rental car pickup appointment! But, you'll be rewarded with plenty of time to enjoy the Studio Tour, the Café and Gift Shop, *and* the Knight Bus Pickup Playground area (Site #22), if you wish. You'll also have plenty of time to reach your first outside-London Potter Place.