

Urban Explorer @karlmond's Travel Itinerary

"While it may seem that I talk only about food and not often about fashion, the creativity and diversity of food is a huge influence on my passion for creative direction, and to me it is absolutely interlinked."

- 8am** ● --- We've just moved house so I'm just getting used to my new schedule. In South London, there's quite a few green areas to take the outdoors in. We have a year-old Whippet called Ian, who I take out every morning. We used to live near the Russia Dock Woodland, which leads to a fantastic view of the Thames. Stave Hill is nearby and boasts one of London's most impressive panoramic views. At 8AM, I take the dog out to the woods and chat to the locals for a good hour. There's a fantastic local dog community, with a park section secluded within trees and streams.
- 10am** ● --- If I'm shooting, I tend to set the call time around 10AM. People on set seem much less grumpy with an extra hour of waking up. If not, this is a great time to get the day set up. I absolutely love a phone off, cafe breakfast with a cheap cup of tea (and quite easily the best place to get a cup of tea). If I am feeling fancier, it depends where I need to be. In Central London, there are fantastic spots for breakfast but I do very much enjoy Riding House Cafe. It's one of those places that you could stay a little longer and work your way through to brunch with some Bloody Marys. In East London, Well Street Kitchen was right round the corner from a studio I frequented. Though not breakfast, it served one of the best spaghettis bolognese I've ever had, and have attempted to replicate at least a dozen times.
- 12pm** ● --- Though the Tate Modern is an obvious choice, it is one because of all the right reasons. The exhibitions feel vast, the gift shops are exciting, and the free exhibition rooms are a great introduction to looking at art.
- If I decide to go shopping instead, Selfridges will always be my favourite of all the department stores, both for its experience but also nostalgic reasons because of day trips with my mum and aunty. Dover Street Market is a close second because it is always worth browsing through the Comme offering. The flagship store for Snow Peak down St James is absolutely worth checking out. You should also walk into any Aesop stores you see, as they all tend to have unique designs. The St James Aesop store was completed by Luca Guadagnino's studio (Call Me By Your Name director).
- 1pm** ● --- Lunchtime! You're spoilt for choices in East London. Dishoom for modern curry. Smoking Goat for Thai. Keu for Vietnamese. My absolute favourite stop off - Dumpling Shack at Old Spitalfields Market. Most places in Old Spitalfields Market will both satisfy and excite you culinary wise. If I'm in Central London, Cicchetti by St James offers the most heavenly lobster ravioli. In Chinatown, I'd probably go to Old Town 97 for an off the menu 'LSE Fried Rice'. Eat Tokyo down Old Compton Street does insanely big bento boxes. If you're South, I tried Levan for the first time recently. It was so very memorable. I had the sweetbreads - unforgettable.
- 3pm** ● --- After a long lunch, something we don't tend to appreciate in England, I enjoy either a coffee with a friend or colleague or I go to play pool. I've been working a lot at 180 Strand which has a great cafe and canteen that serves fantastic pasta. That whole area is interesting because you either cross to Waterloo and go to South Bank, or you carry on down The Strand and it takes you to Somerset House, which are both excellent areas to visit and take in, with plenty of coffee or tea opportunities. I used to play pool at my favourite pub of all time, The Duke of Wellington on Haggerston Road, but Covid rules changed a lot and sadly the table was taken away. The locals however, are absolute gems.
- Around this time to 5PM, London can be so leisurely. It does really feel like you can walk everywhere and you wouldn't miss a thing on your walk. There seems to always be something to see if you stop to take it in. There's so many brilliant pubs, independent stores, florists and cafes rife with individuality.
- 7pm** ● --- Myself and my partner try to go to Pied à Terre every year. David the owner is very, very welcoming. The chef Asimakis has become a friend. They're unbelievably warm and the food is just exceptional if you are looking to spend and be treated for doing so. It's what got us into tasting menus, which are becoming more and more popular just because of all the different things you get to try.
- We also really enjoy Brindisa in Borough Market. She goes mad for the prawns. If you can't get into Padella round the corner, a sister restaurant called Trullo in Highbury and Islington also does the famous cacio e pepe.
- 9pm** ● --- Finish with a drink at said restaurant, or finish with a drink at the pub. Wun's Tea Room down Greek Street in Central has the most incredible old Shanghai decor, taken straight out of a Wong Kar Wai set.
- I had a martini at Drakes event once that was made by the head bartender for Dukes London in Mayfair. Aside from quite easily the smoothest cocktail I've had in my life, it is devilishly pure. I cannot wait to head and try it in the space.
- I talk often about food and all my recommendations are food, but that's because London is easily one of the culinary capitals of the world. Its offering is exceptional. There are good quality ingredients, both contemporary and traditional takes on various cuisines usually made by people indigenous to those areas. This love for food inspires people to cook at home and that's why I have friends who make a great pasta, a great curry and fantastic barbeques. While it may seem that I talk only about food and not often about fashion, the creativity and diversity of food is a huge influence on my passion for creative direction, and to me it is absolutely interlinked.