

# LONDON EYE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

On January 19th, the London Eye began its eleventh year, following maintenance work. David Sharpe, Divisional Director of London Midway attractions, Merlin Entertainments comments, "We are very excited to be opening for our eleventh year as the UK's top paid for visitor experience. The Merlin Entertainments London Eye has welcomed over 36 million visitors in the last nine years and we look forward to continuing to provide the best customer experience for many years to come." The London Eye was originally owned by BA, before Merlin Entertainments took over in 2009. It was opened by Tony Blair on December 31 1999 and it was available to the public on March 9 2000.

During the past ten years, The London Eye has welcomed more than 36 million visitors, with more than 45,000 rotations, 433 weddings and more than 3,000 celebrity visits. Originally expected to reside on London's Southbank for five years, it has received an average of almost four million visitors per year.

Although in its opening year the majority of visitors were UK residents, it is now proving to be an even bigger draw for international visitors. In 2009, 67% of visitors were travelling from abroad, with French and German tourists being the most frequent European guests. But it is Americans who make up the vast majority of non-European visitors.



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- There are 32 capsules - one for each of the London boroughs. For superstitious reasons they are numbered up to 33, with capsule 13 left out for good luck.
- Each capsule weighs 11 tonnes - in total the London Eye weighs 2,100 tonnes, the equivalent to 1,272 London Black cabs.
- The London Eye can carry 800 passengers per revolution - equivalent to 11 London red double-decker buses.
- Kate Moss holds the record for the UK celebrity that's enjoyed the most rotations, standing at 25.
- Jessica Alba holds the record for an overseas celebrity that's enjoyed the most rotations, standing at 31.

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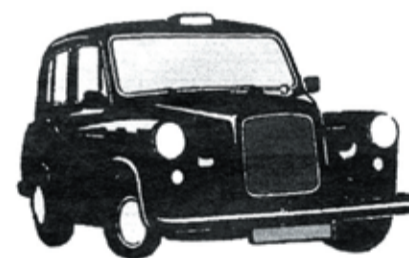
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