



**New women-led walking tours exploring different communities, cultures and cuisines
launch in London and Edinburgh**



24 June 2025: A series of new immersive, walking tours led by women of Syrian, Ukrainian, Saudi Arabian and Iberian heritage are launching today, part of a growing portfolio of tours in collaboration with social enterprise Women in Travel CIC (www.womenintravelcic.com).

The women-led tours will take place in London and Edinburgh and celebrate the culture, cuisines and community of the women leading them, all of whom are graduates of Women in Travel CIC's [Tour Guiding Academy](#) programme. The initiative, which this year has been supported by Google and the TUI Care Foundation's Futureshapers programme, trains women - many of whom have been disconnected from the workforce - to design and deliver an immersive tour based on their own narrative and background. The focus is on personal storytelling and exploring destinations through the lives and cultures of the guides delivering them, offering a unique and authentic perspective on the locations and giving voice to different heritages and communities.

The [new tours](#) are as follows:

[Saudi Cultural Experience in London: Traditional Hospitality and Belly Dancing tour](#), led by Amal Ahmed. Three hours, £87 per person.

Starting on Edgware Road, this three-hour tour begins with traditional Saudi Arabian hospitality with Arabic coffee and traditional dishes in a local café, while Amal shares insight into the traditional cooking methods and discusses the role of gender in Saudi culture. It goes on to explore the significance of Arabian oud, musk and the ritual of burning *Bukhur* in a perfumery on

Oxford Street, hears tales of pioneering Saudi female musicians in a nearby musical instrument shop and feels the transformative power of dance through personal stories and an introduction to belly dance.

[*Exploring Syrian Heritage in London: Stories of Art, Food and Tradition*](#), led by *Nadia Aburdene*. Three hours, £77 per person.

Nadia is a London-raised Syrian-Palestinian whose roots run deep in Damascus. Through her lived experiences and family stories, old Damascus is brought to life starting within the exquisite beauty of the Arab Hall in Leighton House, and finishing at a traditional ice cream parlour in Shepherds Bush, witnessing how booza, a stretchy ice cream dating back to the 15th century, is made. Nadia celebrates Syrian communities and restaurateurs living in London, and guests on the tour will try their hand at making manoushe, a beloved Middle Eastern pastry, and learn about regional produce like za'atar and Aleppo soap.

[*Bridges Across Borders: Tracing Ukrainian Roots in the Heart of Edinburgh Tour*](#), led by *Nataliya Bezborodova*. Two hours, 57 per person.

On this intimate two-hour walking tour, Ukrainian-born refugee Nataliya takes her guests on a journey of shared heritage, memories, and stories of migration in the heart of Edinburgh, which is twinned with Kyiv. Starting at the National Galleries of Scotland, the tour takes in the story of Queen Margaret, an 11th-century royal whose roots trace back to Kyiv; the Duke of Wellington statue, a site of weekly Ukrainian gatherings; the Holodomor Memorial Stone, a quiet, powerful space that honours the victims of the 1932–33 famine and a Ukrainian Community Centre founded in 1947, where resilient Ukrainians are keeping their culture alive. The tour finishes with a feast at a local café, with a selection of dishes blending Ukrainian and Scottish flavours, accompanied by stories of culture and identity.

[*Iberian Footprints in the Heart of London: Queens, Wine & Waterways*](#), led by *Florbela Trindade*. Three hours, £77 per person.

Florbela, a passionate guide of Portuguese-Spanish heritage, shares her love of London's riverside on a three-hour walk uncovering the Iberian influences woven into London's past. Tracing the footsteps of pioneering queens, merchants, migrants, and spiritual leaders, Florbela reveals the stories of the women who shaped and were shaped by London's long-standing ties with Spain and Portugal. Starting at Monument, it visits historical docks, steps inside London's oldest church which was once a refuge for Iberian sailors, hears how a Portuguese princess introduced tea to the English court and celebrates the alliance between England and Portugal, one of the world's oldest, with a taste port and sherry in an atmospheric pub near St Katherine's Docks.

Aimed at residents and visitors alike, the tours are new additions to Women in Travel's growing portfolio of women-led tours, which already includes [*Ethiopian Flavours of Shepherds Bush*](#) led by Sefanit Mengiste (also available through Intrepid Travel's Urban Adventures programme) and Vaishali Patel's [*Immersive India Tour of North London*](#) which explores the Gujarati culture along London's Ealing Road.

A percentage of the proceeds from each tour goes back into supporting Women in Travel's ongoing mission to provide women – many of whom are refugees, abuse survivors or members of under-represented communities – with the opportunity to fulfil their economic and individual potential through employability and entrepreneurship.

Alessandra LoTufo Alonso, MD and Founder of Women in Travel CIC, said:

“I passionately believe in the power of these new tours as a catalyst for a more inclusive world. We’re celebrating the different communities and cultures living here in the UK, because there are so many stories, rich experiences and so much beauty to be enjoyed on our doorsteps, from the music, dance and perfume of Saudi Arabia to the art and design of Damascus, the food of Ukraine and the historical connections between the UK and the Iberian peninsula.

“Understanding diverse cultures breaks down barriers and fosters connection and community integration. We want to encourage curiosity and appreciation, as it is through our shared humanity that we will reach a more peaceful world. I’m incredibly grateful to the TUI Care Foundation and Google for helping us bring these tours to fruition, and we are looking forward to rolling out the Tour Guiding Academy programme across the UK and further afield with industry support.”

The women have been supported on their journey with mentoring, storytelling and tour guiding skills by a team of experts including Elisa Spampinato of Traveller Storyteller and Klaudija Janzelj, Head of City Experiences at TUI.

Klaudija Janzelj said:

“It has been such a privilege to get to know the women leading these new tours, and they should be really proud of themselves and what they have achieved. The result of their hard work is a series of engaging, immersive tours in London and Edinburgh that show a different side to these cities beyond the obvious sights, from a fun, informative, authentic and truly unique perspective. These tours offer exactly what today’s travel industry—and inquisitive travellers—are looking for: meaningful ways to connect more deeply with a destination.”

Veronika Blach, Head of Environmental Programmes, added:

“Our mission at the TUI Care Foundation is to build on the potential of tourism as a force for good. In particular, our TUI Futureshapers programme is about empowering people to turn social and environmental challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities in their localities. Women in Travel’s Tour Guiding Academy is the perfect example of this, and we’re so pleased to have supported this, our first TUI Futureshapers project in London. Congratulations to all the women in bringing their tours to market. I have no doubt that by sharing their heritage and personal stories, they will help to facilitate greater understanding of different cultures living here in the UK, breaking down barriers and fostering an environment of inclusion and shared humanity.”

Amelie Matuschka, Industry Manager – Travel, at Google, said:

“We’ve been honoured to share this journey with the women from the beginning, and watch their development into tour guides in the cities that they now call home. I remember meeting them for the first time in our Google offices as part of our #Iamremarkable programme and it’s amazing to see how - through that initiative, with the support and training from Alessandra, Klaudija and Elisa and of course through the hard work and passion of the women themselves – they have grown in confidence, strength and expertise. Nothing gives me more pride than seeing real impact from being part of this initiative that has given voice to these incredible women and their communities.”

The tours range from £58 to £87 per person and vary in length from two – three hours. They are not necessarily available every day, so advance booking is essential.

For more information and to book visit:

<https://www.womenintravelcic.com/entrepreneurship/women-led-tours/>

For more information on Women in Travel's mission: www.womenintravelcic.com

To hear more from Alessandra LoTufo Alonso on the power of tour guiding to foster connection and community integration, watch her TEDx Talk [here](#).

-Ends-

Images of the new tours are available [here](#).

For media information, please contact: caroline@carolinecalvert.co.uk / 07715 996278

About Women in Travel CIC

Women in Travel CIC (www.womenintravelcic.com) is a UK based award winning social enterprise that connects underserved, diverse female talent to employment and enterprising opportunities in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry. It partners with employers and organisations to provide talent services, education and events that foster a more diverse and inclusive industry.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.