I have to admit that every time I do end up in Covent Garden, I come away wondering why I don't go more often as it holds a certain vibrancy and joie de vivre that is hard to ignore. No matter what time of year, be it spring, summer, autumn or winter, there is always a festive atmosphere and a buzz about the place.

One of the attractions of Covent Garden is that there are always a large numbers of street performers keeping the crowds entertained. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to listen to an opera singer performing in the square and whose voice blew me away, been told my future by a tarot card reader, watched an escapologists try to break free from chains, observed and been perplexed by the sight of a man dressed as a statue levitating off the ground (something which must have a logical explanation but one I have yet to figure out), watched a man juggle while on a unicycle and watched alongside the rest of the crowd sometimes in awe, sometimes in bewilderment but always with delight. People cheer and clap at the performers and drop a coin or two in the hats or boxes placed strategically in front and there is always a party atmosphere.

The Piazza has a number of cafes and restaurants dotted around so there is always somewhere to sit and watch the fun or rest your feet while you savour your cup of coffee (albeit an expensive cup of coffee) or have a meal. There is also a wide selection of shops around the square.

In 2010 The Piazza found itself housing the largest Apple store in the world. But if it's not technology that you are after, Covent Garden is a wonderful place to go and browse for antiques, jewellery, clothing, gifts and paintings that are displayed in little stalls within the Central Hall and Jubilee Hall Market situated on the south side of the square. There is also an eclectic collection of shops to lure in tourists and residents alike. Some of the shops are a bit odd but full of character selling all sorts of rarer luxury goods as well as the usual high street chains and clothes boutiques. The place is unusual in that it's a huge, vibrant open market heaving with people. You can't help but be distracted by the various sights, sounds and smells or rather fragrances emanating from the stores. At times it can feel like an onslaught on all your senses (but in a good way)!



Even locals feel like tourists.

Being in Covent Garden is always a unique experience, a bit like being a tourist every time and seeing it with fresh eyes and from a different perspective. You could actually spend the whole day just walking around watching the street performers, do a little bit of shopping, stop for a coffee or meal and even end up watching a performance at the Royal Opera House or you could just sit and soak in the atmosphere. All in all, not such a bad place to be on a Saturday afternoon even with a bit of bad weather!