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**BBC** Worldwide

# EastEnders

Britain's award-winning, top-rating soap, now celebrating its 15th successful year

**Drama**

Approx 157 x 30 minutes per year

**BBC** Worldwide

# EastEnders

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## Introduction

Set in the fictitious London Borough of Walford, E20, *EastEnders* focuses on the multi-racial community who live and work in and around Albert Square.

Since the first episode – broadcast on 19 February 1985, at 7 pm, to an audience of 17 million viewers – it has captured the imagination of audiences around the globe. Addicts know the families, love the nice characters, hate villains and trouble-makers, and discuss the major storylines as if they were events happening in their own lives.

Fan clubs have sprung up world-wide and the BBC's official *EastEnders* internet site at [www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/) is one of the most visited on the web.

*EastEnders* moves effortlessly between comedy and tragedy, and though it never shies away from dealing with social issues, it is good family entertainment, enjoyed by people of all ages.

*EastEnders* is consistently winning viewers' awards, but it has also been awarded Best Drama at BAFTA, a unique accolade for a soap. In all, *EastEnders* has won 34 awards, including several Best Actor and Best Actress. Barbara Windsor, who plays pub landlady Peggy Mitchell, was awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire in the New Millennium Honours List.

With average weekly audiences of 20 million in Britain, *EastEnders* scores consistently high in the ratings. Christmas episodes do especially well, often topping the hotly contested chart. Two episodes share the highest-ever ratings: 25 December 1986 when 27.9 million views tuned in to watch pub landlord 'Dirty Den' Watts serve divorce papers on his neurotic wife, Angie; and New Year's Day, 1987, when Tiffany Butcher was killed.

*EastEnders* is put together by five/six production teams in rotation and a large pool of established writers. The series' headquarters is at BBC Elstree where it has its own specially built lot.

A number of BBC books and videos have been published to accompany the series, and several of the stars have had hit records in the pop charts.

Last month, *EastEnders* celebrated its 15th birthday. The BBC invited viewers to phone in their votes for their favourite episode and was besieged with callers. As the soap's popularity continues to grow, it's certain that *EastEnders* will still be topping the charts in 15 years' time!

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## Classic storylines

### Michelle and Den

When teenage schoolgirl Michelle Fowler became pregnant, she refused to name the father. For a long time, only viewers knew her secret. It was her best friend's father – and Albert Square's most notorious philanderer, Den Watts.

### The Lie

Pub landlords Den and Angie Watts' marriage was on the rocks. When Angie discovered Den was about to leave her, she made a last, desperate bid to keep him. She told him she had only six months left to live.

### Sharongate

Sharon confessed on tape that she had slept with her husband's twin brother. The truth came out in the middle of a packed pub. Psychotic Grant hit the roof and Phil was lucky to survive.

### Beale versus Beale

Ian Beale's custody battle against his notoriously unfaithful wife, Cindy, came after he'd had to snatch the kids back from Italy. The court gave Cindy custody but immediately after she was arrested and imprisoned for conspiracy to murder him.

### The Eternal Triangle

When Tiffany's mother, Louise, came to Albert Square, the sexual chemistry between her and Tiffany's husband, Grant, smouldered for weeks before they ended up in bed. When Tiffany found out, it was the last straw. But Grant wasn't about to give up his daughter without a struggle.

### The Murder in the Club

Matthew Rose reduced his former nightclub boss, Steve Owen, to a quivering wreck in revenge for the months he wrongly spent behind bars over the killing of Saskia Duncan. Matthew pushed him to breaking point by pouring what Steve thought was petrol around him and convincing him he would be set alight.

### The Crash

The Mitchell twins' bust-up was typically violent. When Grant slept with Phil's ex in revenge over Sharongate, Phil snapped. After holding Grant at gunpoint, he drove their car into the Thames, with both of them in it.

### Melanie's wedding

Ian Beale's disastrous love-life continues. His beautiful fiancé Melanie was having second thoughts when Ian told her his young daughter had cancer. He only told her about the all-clear after the wedding. Mel walked out in disgust.

### Lisa's pregnancy

The market governor certainly has staying power. She stuck by Phil Mitchell when his ex Kathy returned with their son, and even when he went back to the bottle. Just when everything looked rosy though, she discovered she was pregnant. Phil refuses to have another child and wants her to have an abortion. But Lisa wants to keep it.

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## **Bad Boys and Wicked Women**

### **Den Watts**

Better known as Dirty Den, landlord of the Queen Vic pub. He fathered schoolgirl Michelle Fowler's baby, constantly cheated on his wife and eventually wound up dead in the canal.

### **James Wilmott-Brown**

Owner of the Dagmar pub, he raped attractive blonde barmaid, Kathy Beale, then denied it.

### **Nick Cotton**

Currently in prison. It was Nick who murdered Queen Vic landlord Eddie Royle and he wasn't above trying to kill his mother Dot either when she came into some money.

### **The Mitchell Twins**

Walford's hard men, Phil and Grant are prone to bad temper and violence and treat their women like dirt.

### **David Wicks**

The lecherous love-rat began his sojourn in Albert Square by trying to seduce Bianca Jackson, unaware that she was his daughter. His affair with Cindy Beale caused a scandal, but he ditched her when she left Ian, then had brief fling with Bianca's married mum Carol before he took himself abroad.

### **Cindy Beale**

Cindy married Ian while pregnant with Simon Wicks' child, letting him believe he was the father. When she left him, the truth came out. Ian gave her a second chance, but bored Cindy had another affair, paid someone to kill Ian, ran away with the kids to Italy then fought Ian for custody. She died in prison.

### **Martin Fowler**

A typically sullen teenager, Martin steals from his mum, his neighbours, anyone, and has been in trouble with the police. He is currently trying his luck at romance. But if he'll have both diMarco brothers on his back if he messes with their kid sister, Nicky.

### **Janine Butcher**

Janine was passed around from pillar to post when she was young and is now out of control. Devious and bitchy, she's already hurt Jamie Mitchell and knows just how to worry her dad Frank into giving her what she wants.

### **Dan Sullivan**

The latest half-owner of the Queen Vic follows in the great soap tradition of Dirty Den and psycho Grant. Another serial bedhopper, Dan has a dodgy past and the locals hate him for wrecking Ricky Butcher's marriage by romping with wife Bianca while he was engaged to her mum.

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## From TV to Pop

Several of the EastEnders cast have had chart success:

Letitia Dean and Paul Medford (Sharon Watts/Mitchell and Nigel Bates)  
*Something Outa Nothing*

Patsy Palmer and Sid Owen (Bianca and Ricky Butcher)  
*Better Believe It*

Top 10 hits include:

Anita Dobson (Angie Watts)  
*Anyone Can Fall in Love*

Nick Berry (Simon Wicks)  
*Every Loser Wins (No 1)*

Michelle Gayle (Hattie Tavernier)  
*Sweetness*  
*Sensational*  
*Do You Know?*

Martine McCutcheon (Tiffany Mitchell)  
*Perfect Moment (No 1)*  
*I've Got You*  
*Love Me*

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## Awards

### TV & Radio Industries Club Awards

BBC TV Programme Of The Year  
Special Award  
Best Theme Music

### Pye Television Awards

Outstanding Female Personality: Anita Dobson  
Outstanding Male Personality: Leslie Grantham

### SOS Star Awards

Best TV Programme

### Oracle TV Poll

Best Soap Opera

### Women Of Achievement Awards

Actress/Entertainer: June Brown

### Royal Television Society Programme & Technology Awards

Team Award

### Comic Heritage Comedy Awards

TV Personality: Barbara Windsor

### National Television Awards

Most Popular Soap  
Most Popular Serial Drama  
Most Popular Actress: Martine McCutcheon

### Capital Radio (Slammers Awards)

People's Choice Award

### TV Quick Awards

Best Soap (awarded twice)  
Best Soap Actress: Martine McCutcheon  
Best New Actor: Jack Ryder  
Best Soap Actor: Ross Kemp  
Best Soap Storyline  
Best Soap Actor: Joe Absolom

### BAFTA

Best Drama Series  
Best Soap (awarded twice)

### British Soap Awards

Sexiest Female: Tamzin Outhwaite  
Sexiest Male: Michael Greco  
Best Actor: Ross Kemp  
Best Actress: Barbara Windsor  
Best Storyline: Tiffany's Discovery of her  
Husband's Affair with her Mother

### Promax UK

Silver – Best Drama Production

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## What the Papers Say

"Probably the best written drama produced on television." *Guardian*

"Just gets better and better." *Star*

"Simply sensational soap." *People*

"Echoes and encapsulates all the joy, humour, sadness and tragedy of real life." *Today*

"Those who watch are addicts; you could feed them EastEnders on a drip!" *Sydney Morning Herald*

"EastEnders is already something more than a mere TV series. It is a habit, a social phenomenon." *La Vanguardia, Spain*

"People are in a frenzy about EastEnders." *KOCE, Los Angeles*

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