



# London Bridge Is Falling Down

"London Bridge Is Falling Down" (also known as "My Fair Lady" or "London Bridge") is a traditional English nursery rhyme and singing game, which is found in different versions all over the world.

In the "London Bridge" singing game there are several players (usually eight or more), two of whom join hands high to form an arch (the bridge). The other players march under the bridge, each holding onto the waist of the player in front. Either the players forming the bridge or all the players sing:

*London Bridge is falling down,  
Falling down, falling down,  
London Bridge is falling down,  
My fair lady.*



At the last word, the arms of the bridge are lowered to capture the last player through. The song continues with more stanzas.

There is considerable variation in the lyrics of the rhyme. Here is one of the versions:

*London Bridge is falling down,  
Falling down, falling down.  
London Bridge is falling down,  
My fair lady.*

*Build it up with bricks and mortar,  
Bricks and mortar, bricks and mortar,  
Build it up with bricks and mortar,  
My fair lady.*

*Build it up with wood and clay,  
Wood and clay, wood and clay,  
Build it up with wood and clay,  
My fair lady.*

*Bricks and mortar will not stay,  
Will not stay, will not stay,  
Bricks and mortar will not stay,  
My fair lady.*

*Wood and clay will wash away,  
Wash away, wash away,  
Wood and clay will wash away,  
My fair lady.*

*Build it up with iron and steel,  
Iron and steel, iron and steel,  
Build it up with iron and steel,  
My fair lady.*

*Iron and steel will bend and bow,  
Bend and bow, bend and bow,  
Iron and steel will bend and bow,  
My fair lady.*

*Build it up with silver and gold,  
Silver and gold, silver and gold,  
Build it up with silver and gold,  
My fair lady.*

*Silver and gold will be stolen away,  
Stolen away, stolen away,  
Silver and gold will be stolen away,  
My fair lady.*

*Set a man to watch all night,  
Watch all night, watch all night,  
Set a man to watch all night,  
My fair lady.*

*Suppose the man should fall asleep,  
Fall asleep, fall asleep,  
Suppose the man should fall asleep?  
My fair lady.*

*Give him a pipe to smoke all night,  
Smoke all night, smoke all night,  
Give him a pipe to smoke all night,  
My fair lady.*



## The Wooden Bridge

The 'London Bridge is falling down' Nursery Rhyme is based on the one of the most famous landmarks in London. It's history can be traced to the Roman occupation of England in the first century. The first London Bridge was made of wood and clay and was fortified or re-built with the various materials mentioned in the children's nursery rhyme. Many disasters struck the bridges — Viking invaders destroyed the bridge in the 1000's which led to a fortified design, complete with a drawbridge. Building materials changed due to the many fires that broke out on the bridge.

## The Stone Bridge

The first stone bridge was designed by Peter de Colechurch and built in 1176 and took 33 years to build and featured twenty arches the dimensions of which were sixty feet high and thirty feet wide and was complete with tower and gates. The flow of the Thames under the bridge was used to turn water wheels below the arches for grinding grain. By the 1300's the bridge contained 140 shops, some of which were more than three stories high. (The reference to Silver and Gold in the rhyme relates to the trading which was conducted on the bridge).

London Bridge survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 but its arches and foundations were weakened.

## The Modern Re-builds

In the 1820s a new London Bridge was built on another site, north of the old one. This new bridge opened in 1831 and the old bridge was demolished. In the 1960s yet another London Bridge was built. The London Bridge of 1831 was transported, stone by stone, to Lake Havasu in Arizona, USA.

*Sources of the text: Wikipedia  
britannica.com  
rhymes.org.uk*

*Source of the images: various sites found with the help of Google*