



London

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HISTORY

HISTORY



Its name is derived from the Celtic word Londinios, which means “The Place of the Bold One”. It was the Romans who were responsible for the city we know today as London. The strategic location of the city allowed the Romans easy access to Europe, and the River Thames provided ample water supply. They invaded Britain in AD 43, and soon afterwards founded the city of Londinium.

Tower of London

In 1078, when William I (William the Conqueror) took control of London, He quickly began to build a stronghold to guard London - the Tower of London. The Tower has been used as a castle and a palace, a zoo and a weapons store, a mint (where coins are made) and a prison. At present time, the Tower of London has been opened to the public and includes an exhibition showcasing the Crown Jewels. There is also an annual art installation of a sea of ceramic poppies, which started as honouring the 100-year anniversary of Britain's first involvement in World War I.

London Tested Through The Great Fire

Probably one of the most well-known events in London's dramatic history, the fire destroyed just under 70% of the city's buildings, including the original St Paul's Cathedral. Many richer inhabitants chose to relocate to the West End and aristocratic residences close to the royal court at St James' Palace. Somewhat wisely, all new buildings were made of brick not wood, leading to the popular impression today of the UK being a red-brick country.



MONEY

MONEY



Aside from credit cards, there are various payment methods frequently used in the UK, including checks and debit cards.

Credit Cards

Most expats prefer to use their credit card for various payments, as it is easy and accepted almost all over the world. In the UK, you can use your credit card for various purchases. However, not everything can be paid for that way and some companies and institutions might require you to choose a different method of payment altogether. In this article, we will introduce you to the most popular payment methods in the UK.

Debit Cards

Card payment is probably one of the most popular types of payment, particularly for the regular grocery and retail shopping. Debit cards are particularly popular and convenient. The most commonly used debit cards in the UK are:

Maestro provides PIN-based direct cash access from your bank account in the UK as well as abroad (check with your bank for possible charges when using it overseas).

Debit MasterCards are a safe and convenient way to pay face-to-face, online, and by telephone. They also allow for speedy, contactless payments for transactions of 20 GBP or less. Visa Debit gives the convenience of a credit card while only accessing funds in your current account. You can get cash out at ATMs in the UK as well as abroad (check with your bank for possible charges when using it overseas).

Visa Electron allows no overdraft since all the funds need to be available at the time of transfer. This debit card is especially suitable for young people or those with a poor credit history.



LIBERTY

THE Chip-and-Pin ISSUE

The UK, along with most of the rest of the world, has been using Chip and Pin cards for more than a decade. The cards have an embedded microchip and customers are issued a unique, 4-digit PIN number they have to enter in ATMs or at point of sale machines to use their cards.

Paying for Transportation

There are different ways to pay for your travel.

Pay as you go

Pay as you go (paying only for the trips you make), is the easiest way to pay for travel in London. You can pay as you go on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground, TfL Rail, Emirates Air Line cable car, River Bus and most National Rail services in London.

Contactless payment cards

Most credit, debit and charge cards displaying the contactless symbol can be used for adult rate pay as you go travel on London's public transport. Android Pay and Apple Pay are also accepted.

Visitor Oyster card

A Visitor Oyster card is a smartcard that's pre-loaded with pay as you go credit you can use to pay for travel on London's public transport. You can buy a Visitor Oyster card online from the TfL Visitor Shop or from VisitBritain shops in several languages and currencies, or through approved travel agents. Visitor Oyster cards are only available to buy before you arrive in London.

Oyster card

If you don't have a contactless payment card or a Visitor Oyster card, you can get a standard Oyster card in London. You pay a £5 deposit (refundable) then add pay as you go credit or a Travelcard to pay for your journeys.

You can get an Oyster card from:

Tube, London Overground, TfL Rail and some National Rail stations

Around 3,900 local shops in London, known as Oyster Ticket Stops.

Day Travelcard

Day Travelcards are issued as paper tickets and allow unlimited travel in a single day within the zones they are valid for.

>**Anytime Day Travelcards** – can be used for the whole day (using the date printed on the ticket), and for journeys starting before 04:30 the following day

>**Off-peak Day Travelcards** – valid from 09:30 (Mondays to Fridays) or any time on weekends and public holidays on the day of travel (using the date printed on the ticket), and for journeys starting before 04:30 the following day

HELPFUL INFO



Climate

The climate is influenced by the ocean, and is therefore cool, humid and rainy, with Atlantic fronts passing one after the other throughout the year, and bringing a variable weather, with cloudiness, rains and showers, which alternate, at least in spring and summer, with a few hours of sunshine. The best time to visit London is the summer, or more generally from mid-May to mid-September: temperatures are generally good for outdoors activities, although it's better to bring an umbrella, and a sweatshirt or sweater for the evening or for cool days. In summer you can hope to find a period of good weather, with warm days, in which the maximum temperature is above 25 °C (77 °F), or can even approach 30 °C (86 °F), and in which you can remove the outer layers of clothing, stroll in the numerous parks of the city, and even sunbathe.

Electricity

UK appliances are fitted with three-pin plugs that can be connected to the UK mains supply through wall sockets. Unlike the sockets in many other countries, these have a switch to turn the power supply on and off – make sure you've turned it on if you're trying to charge your appliance! UK power sockets deliver an average voltage of 230-v, although in practice this can be slightly higher. To charge devices that are compatible with this voltage, simply buy the appropriate adapter from the airport or from high street shops such as Argos. If your device runs on a lower voltage, however, then you will also need a converter to stop it from over-heating. Even if your country uses lower voltages, remember to check whether your device is dual-voltage (look for the 110-240 V notation) before buying a converter.



Technology & Communication

London is one of the most technologically advanced cities in the world. Because London relies on its financial sector so much, it has invested heavily in its communications infrastructure, and continues to do so. Being a major tech hub, major tech conferences and events are a routine event in London: The Cloud Computing World Forum, The Operations Support System (OSS) / Business Support System (BSS) World Summit .

If you're visiting London from abroad, don't forget that the UK dialling code is +44 (which replaces the 0) and to check your own country's code before you travel.

Using your mobile phone may cost you more than it does at home. Roaming charges vary between countries and networks: visitors from other EU countries, for example, will pay:

24p per minute to make a call

7p per minute to receive a call

8p to send a text message (SMS)

If you are planning to stay in London for a significant period of time, consider buying a pay-as-you-go SIM card when you arrive. These are available from any mobile telephone shop and allow you to make calls and send text messages at the local rate.

Infrastructure & Transport

London's infrastructure is vitally important – it is the nuts and bolts of the capital. It's continued success as a leading centre for world trade and commerce is critically dependent on free-flowing, frequent and predictable travel to and from the capital. Demand for the rail, road, and air transport infrastructure that links London to the rest of the UK and the wider world continues to rise, as it has for decades.

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

REGENT
STREET W1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

TRE
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HERE

PUBLIC

UNDERGROUND

SUBWAY

In Case Of An Emergency

Call 112 or 999 for the emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) in London. To report non-urgent crime, call the police on 101 from within the UK.

Language

The largest number of community languages in Europe can be found in the United Kingdom. Over 300 languages are currently spoken in London schools. Some of the most established of these are Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Cantonese, Mandarin and Hokkien. The de facto official language of the United Kingdom is English, which is spoken by approximately 59.8-million residents, or 98% of the population, over the age of three.



LGBT Travel

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Religion

London has centres of worship for a multitude of faiths. According to the 2011 Census, the largest religious groupings are Christians (48.4%), followed by those of no religion (20.7%), no response (8.5%), Muslims (12.4%), Hindus (5.0%), Jews (1.8%), Sikhs (1.5%), Buddhists (1.0%) and other (0.6%).



Getting There

The London airports handle 60% of all the UK's air traffic. The airports serve a total of 14 domestic destinations and 396 international destinations. London has five major airports: London City, London Gatwick, London Heathrow, London Luton and London Stansted.

Driving

In London, as in all of the UK, cars drive on the left. Most city streets in London will have a speed limit of 30-MPH, which will be indicated by a round sign. Larger roads will have higher speed limits. The Congestion Charge applies to most vehicles which drive into central London during the week.

THE EXPERIENCE

BRICK LANE E.I.

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The Experience

A concert at The Royal Albert Hall

A picnic in Hyde or Kensington Park

A spot of shopping at Harrods

A night time walking tour of the city

Bucket List

See The Elizabeth Tower (where Big Ben is Housed)

Take a Beefeater Tour at the Tower of London

Admire Buckingham Palace, the residence of Queen Elizabeth and a highly recognizable spot in London.

Visit Westminster Abbey, where kings and queens are crowned, where famous people are buried, and where marriages take place.

Take a Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour

Eat, Drink, and Shop at Covent Garden

Walk through the St. Paul's Cathedral

Ride the famous London Eye, a giant ferris wheel located on the edge of the River Thames



Family Travel Highlights

Wander around the British Museum – Free to visit and best-known for its Egyptian Mummies and holds treasures from all over the world.

Follow Harry Potter to Platform 9 & 3/4

Take a Ride on the London Eye, for 30-minutes you get unparalleled views of London

Visit Borough Market, the ultimate foodie paradise

Stand in the East and West Hemispheres

See a show on the West End, London's theater

Tourist Authority

The London & Partners is the Mayor of London's official promotional agency. It Supports the Mayor's priorities by promoting London internationally as a leading world city in which to invest, work, study and visit.

Foods To Try

Fish & Chips

Sunday Roast with Yorkshire Pudding

Eton Mess

Pie and Mash at The Windmill Mayfair

Bangers and Mash

Cockles

Full English Breakfast

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Afternoon Tea

Beef Wellington



Drinks To Try

Tea (Cocktails)

Strong tea served in a mug with milk and sugar is known as builder's tea, but it's not uncommon to drink it black or with lemon, either with or without sugar.

Real Ale

It's a beer which is brewed from traditional ingredients, is unfiltered, unpasteurised and finishes maturing in the cellar of the pub rather than at the brewery and is served with only natural carbonation.

Cider

Outside the United States, however and especially in the U.K., cider usually refers to fermented apple juice which is an alcoholic beverage. Real cider is cider that contains at least 90% fresh apple juice with no added flavourings, colourings or concentrates.



Photography Hot Spots

Portobello Road

Peggy Porschen

Tower Bridge

Millennium Bridge

Parliament Square

Natural History Museum

Sky Garden

Souvenirs To Buy

Liberty Print Knot Watch

Harrods Coffee in an Exclusive Tin

K2 Phone Box Bookend

Sanctuary Spa Products

Buckingham Palace Hand Towel

Dartington Crystal Drinking Glasses

Harrods English Butterscotch Biscuits (Cookies)

London Memory Game

Commemorative Pillbox

