



# **STARTING YOUR LFA JOURNEY:**

**A Guide to Life in London**

Welcome to London, and to London Film Academy.

London is an incredible place to live and study, and while the cost of living may be different from what you are used to, there are plenty of ways to manage your budget and still enjoy what the city has to offer.

You'll find great food, cafés, bars and shops everywhere you turn, along with endless cultural opportunities wherever you go.

At times, London may feel fast-paced, but most people are helpful and approachable. Students often build strong friendships here, and being open to meeting others can make a real difference to how you feel at home.

Although you are here to study, taking time to experience the city can really enrich your time at LFA. London has so much to offer, and being open to new experiences can help you make the most of your time.

To help you settle in smoothly, we've created this comprehensive guide to support your arrival. Think of it as your roadmap to finding a home, staying healthy, managing money, and exploring the city.

## ACCOMMODATION: FINDING YOUR NEW HOME

Given the high demand for affordable student accommodation in London, especially before the start of the academic year, we recommend securing accommodation early to avoid disappointment. Please remember that arranging accommodation is the students' responsibility.

LFA doesn't offer student accommodation, however, there are various options in nearby areas within a short commuting distance, including accommodation in Hammersmith, Chelsea, Earl's Court, Parson's Green, Putney, Battersea, and Wimbledon. The nearest tube station to LFA is Fulham Broadway, on the District Line of the London Underground. Additionally, West Brompton station, part of the London Overground network, is just a 10-minute walk away.

For detailed information on local student housing options, please visit our [Accommodation](#) page. Please note that details for listed accommodation sites may change without prior notice, so contacting them directly for clarification is advisable.

### Private Rental Guarantor

This is common practice in London and the UK in general. Many private landlords and letting agencies require a UK-based guarantor - someone who agrees to cover the rent if the tenant cannot pay. Some landlords specifically request a London-based guarantor, though this is not a legal requirement, just a preference. For international students, this can be challenging since you often do not have family or contacts in the UK who can act as a guarantor. LFA cannot act as guarantors however, in such cases, students typically have the following options:

- **Paying Rent in Advance**  
Some landlords allow students to pay 3, 6, or even 12 months of rent upfront instead of providing a guarantor.
- **Using a Guarantor Service**  
Companies like Housing Hand, RentGuarantor can act as a guarantor for a fee.

# ARRIVING IN LONDON

Depending on where you arrive, it's useful to plan your journey to your accommodation in advance. The information below outlines travel options from London's major airports and international train stations to help make your arrival smoother.

## Getting to your Accommodation from the Airport

### Heathrow airport

- **Tube:** The Piccadilly and Elizabeth lines run a regular service from Heathrow to several central destinations across London, including South Kensington and Kings Cross St Pancras. The tube is much cheaper than the Heathrow Express or the Heathrow Connect. Check out the [Transport for London website](#).
- **Heathrow Express:** The [Heathrow Express](#) runs every 15 minutes directly to Paddington Station. The journey time is 15 minutes.

### Gatwick airport

- The [Gatwick Express](#) runs every 15 minutes directly to Victoria Station. The journey time is 30 minutes. Cheaper, slower trains are also available to Victoria, London Bridge and City Thameslink stations, and take 35–45 minutes.

### Stansted airport

The [Stansted Express](#) runs every 15 minutes to Liverpool Street and Tottenham Hale. The journey time is 35 minutes to Tottenham Hale and 46 minutes to Liverpool Street.

### Luton airport

[Thameslink trains](#) run every 15 minutes directly to St. Pancras International, Blackfriars and London Bridge stations.

### London City airport

The [Docklands Light Railway](#) (DLR) trains run regularly between London City Airport and central London.

### St. Pancras International Station

International trains arrive at London's [St. Pancras International station](#), with direct access to Northern, Piccadilly, Victoria, Circle, Hammersmith & City and Metropolitan lines and national and regional railway services.

### Coaches from the airports

Several coach companies run regular services from Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airport to Victoria. Journey times range from 40 minutes to 1 hour 40 minutes.

- [National Express](#)
- [easyBus](#)

### Uber or Taxis

You may prefer to take a taxi or an [Uber](#). Be aware that Black Cabs can be more expensive, so it is worth asking for an estimated fare before you get in. Comparing prices and booking minicabs or taxis online is often quicker and more cost-effective than calling by phone.

# GETTING AROUND LONDON

London has everything to offer, from vibrant neighbourhoods to iconic landmarks, and it's easy to explore using the city's excellent public transport system. The network includes buses, the Underground (Tube), DLR, Overground and rail services.

## The London Underground

The Tube is one of the quickest ways to get around London, with more than 270 stations across Greater London, each line has its own colour and name, and if you are unsure which route to take, [Transport for London's \(TfL\) journey planner](#) is a helpful tool.

## Buses

London's buses offer a more scenic way to travel, although they can be slower during busy times. You only need to tap in when boarding. Real-time bus arrival information is available through [TfL's website or apps](#).

## By Bike

Cycling is becoming more popular in London with plenty of dedicated cycle routes and hire bikes have become an incredibly useful way of getting around and for a small fee, offer an active and enjoyable way to explore the city.

## Docked services – return to a set point

- **Santander Cycles:** Cost: £1.65 for 30 minutes, £3.30 for e-bike; £2 for 24-hour access, first 30 minutes free. This scheme allows you to rent a bike from docking stations across central London.

## Dockless services

- **Lime:** Cost: £1 to unlock, 23p per minute
- **HumanForest:** Cost: 10 minutes free daily, then 19p per minute + 50p parking fee
- **Dott:** Cost: £1 to unlock, 19p per minute
- **Tier:** Cost: £1 to unlock, 19p per minute

## Paying for Travel on Public Transport

The easiest way to pay for public transport is with a contactless bank card or mobile payment method, such as Apple Pay or Google Pay or an Oyster Card (students get a 30% discount on travel). Simply tap in at the start of your journey and tap out at the end. Daily fare caps ensure you never pay more than the cost of a one-day travel pass, making it convenient and cost-effective.

## Getting an 18+ Oyster Card

You can get discounted travel with a 18+ Student Oyster photocard. Applications open on 1 September each year. Once you've enrolled at LFA, make an application on <https://photocard.tfl.gov.uk/account>. You'll need the following to apply:

- An active email address
- Student enrolment ID from LFA
- [A London borough](#) address
- [A Digital photo](#) which must be a .jpg, .bmp or .gif file and less than 6MB
- A debit or credit card to pay the £21 administration fee

## DRIVING IN THE UK

Nationals of any country can use their national driving licence to drive in the UK for their first year of residence. After that, you will need to take the UK driving test. You must also have valid UK car insurance, and the car must be registered, taxed and have a valid MOT certificate. For more information, visit the [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\) Website](#).

## CLOTHES AND CLIMATE

London's weather can change quickly, so it's best to be prepared with layers and an umbrella. Temperatures range from around -3 degrees in winter to about 32 degrees in summer. Check your phone's weather app or the BBC Weather website before heading out. When packing, bring a mix of light clothing for warmer days and coats, hats, and gloves for winter, and be ready for sudden changes in temperature or unexpected rain.

- **Spring (March to May)**  
Temperatures vary quite a bit, with both chilly and warmer days. Layers such as cardigans, jumpers and a light jacket work well.
- **Summer (June to August)**  
It can get warm, but evenings are often cooler, and rain is still common. A light jacket or cardigan for the evenings, and a waterproof jacket or umbrella.
- **Autumn (September to November)**  
Temperatures drop, especially from October onwards. Early autumn calls for a light jacket or jumper, moving to a warmer coat, scarf and gloves as it gets colder. This is also typically the wettest season.
- **Winter (December to February)**  
Expect cold, often rainy weather and shorter days. A warm coat, scarf, gloves and hat are essential. Snow is rare, but frost and freezing temperatures are not.

### General tips

- Layering is key and helps you adjust as temperatures change throughout the day.
- Waterproofs are essential: A light waterproof jacket or an umbrella is very useful.

Check the weather forecast. London weather can change quickly, so it's worth checking the daily forecast before heading out. Most mobile phones have weather apps you can use, and the [BBC Weather website](#) is also useful for keeping an eye on the forecast.



# HEALTHCARE: REGISTERING WITH THE NHS

Looking after your health is important when you move away from home. Register with a local GP as soon as possible, especially if you have an ongoing condition. International students can access NHS services through the Immigration Health Surcharge, and local pharmacies also offer medical advice.

- Use the [NHS website](#) to find a GP local to you and enter your postcode to locate the closest GP to you.
- Register with a GP:
  - **Register online:** Fill in a registration form (circa 15 mins). You should be told when you have been registered. It will usually be within 5 days of the surgery getting your details, but it may take longer.
  - **Register in person:** Go to the surgery you want to register with, fill in a form (only offered at some surgeries), take proof of address and ID with you when you visit. Or download the [register with a GP surgery paper form](#), fill it in and take it to the surgery you want to register with.

As doctors cannot treat dental problems; it is important to register with a local dentist. While some NHS dental care is subsidised, not all treatment is free, and you may be able to apply for help with some costs, including prescriptions and dental fees.

## HEALTH EMERGENCIES

The A&E department (accident and emergency) at your local hospital is for serious injuries and life-threatening emergencies. It's also known as the emergency department or casualty.

### When to call or use NHS 111:

- Call 111 for urgent medical help when your GP surgery is closed or if you are unsure where to get help for a medical issue. They can direct you to the best place for help, which may include an urgent treatment centre, an out-of-hours GP, or advice to go to A&E if necessary.

### When to call 999:

- Call 999 from any UK phone if there is an immediate danger to life or property and you need the police, ambulance, or fire brigade, for example in a serious accident, stroke, or heart attack. Stay on the line and answer the operator's questions as best you can.

### When to call 101

- Call 101 from any UK phone for non-emergency police assistance or to report a crime that is not urgent.

### Mental health emergencies:

- Text **"SHOUT"** to **85258 from a mobile**: This is a free, 24/7 text support service for urgent mental health needs.
- **Call the Samaritans**: You can call them for free anytime at **116 123**.
- By calling 111 from any UK phone

Day to day mental health support is available from:

- LFA Student Support and Wellbeing Manager
- Your GP
- [Togetherall](#) - online community

## WORKING IN THE UK

If you plan to work while studying in the UK and you hold a Student Visa, please check your visa conditions to make sure this is permitted. You can also refer to our Student Visa Guidance: <https://londonfilmacademy.com/student-visa>

All students who wish to work in the UK need to apply for a [National Insurance number](#). This is a reference number issued by the UK government that allows you to be taxed and paid for any work you do.

## BUDGETING AND FOOD PLANNING

Eating in the UK can sometimes be expensive, but there are plenty of ways to save money while still enjoying good food. Efficient food planning is one of the most effective ways to save both money and time.

- **Meal planning** involves deciding what to eat in advance, creating a shopping list, and avoiding impulse purchases or costly takeaways. Check out this [website](#) for some great recipes.
- **Batch cooking** (preparing large quantities of food in one go and freezing leftovers for later) ensures you have healthy, pre-made meals ready throughout the week, reducing the need for expensive last-minute food options and making the most of your ingredients.

### Tips and resources to help you stretch your budget:

- Most large supermarkets offer free loyalty cards that give you access to money-saving deals, discounts, and points that can be redeemed for coupons or rewards. Popular ones include [Tesco Clubcard](#), [Sainsbury's Nectar](#), [Morrisons More](#), [Co-op Membership](#), [Lidl Plus](#), and [Asda Rewards](#).
- Use student discount apps. Apps like [Student Beans](#) and [UniDays](#) who regularly offer discounts on food, groceries, restaurants, and more. Be sure to check them often for updated deals.
- Take advantage of meal deals. Many supermarkets offer “meal deals” — typically including a main meal, a drink, and a snack at a discounted price. *Pro tip:* choose the most expensive items to get the best value.
- Look out for student discounts at restaurants - chains like Nando's, Pizza Hut, and Subway frequently offer student discounts for students in the UK.
- Check platforms like [Student Beans](#) or [UniDays](#) for valid food deals.
- Try meal kit subscriptions, services such as [HelloFresh](#), [Gousto](#), and [Simply Cook](#) deliver recipes and ingredients to your door, making cooking easier and often cheaper than eating out. They usually offer student discounts or introductory deals.

### Food and drink discounts:

- [BrewDog](#) offers a student discount of 25% off food and drink in their bars every day, and an additional 50% off food and drink every Sunday from 4pm.
- [Slug and Lettuce](#) offers 25% off food all day Sunday-Thursday by verifying your student status via the MiXR app.
- [Honest Burgers](#) offers students 30% off the total bill (food & drink) Sunday-Thursday with a valid Student Beans account.
- [Busaba](#) will give students 25% off food for groups of up to 6, Sunday-Thursday, when you show a student or NUS card.
- [Pho](#) offers 15% student discount on dine-in or takeaway Vietnamese meals.



# EXPLORING LONDON

Explore London for its history, culture, entertainment, and wide range of shopping and dining options. The city has something for everyone, with iconic landmarks, royal palaces, free museums and plenty of green spaces to enjoy, whatever your interests or budget.

## Historical and cultural landmarks

London is home to world-famous historical and cultural landmarks, from royal palaces to renowned museums and galleries, reflecting its rich and diverse heritage:

- **Tower of London:** Explore over 900 years of history and see the Crown Jewels.
- **British Museum:** View a vast collection of world art and antiquities.
- **Westminster Abbey:** Visit this historic Gothic abbey, the coronation church of British monarchs.
- **Houses of Parliament & Big Ben:** Learn about British government and see the iconic clock tower.
- **Buckingham Palace:** Tour the official residence of the monarch.
- **London Eye:** Take a ride for stunning 360-degree views of the city.
- **Tower Bridge:** Walk across this iconic bridge and visit the exhibition.
- **Sky Garden:** Enjoy free views of London from a public garden at the top of a skyscraper.

## Museums and galleries

London is home to many world-famous museums with free entry to their permanent collections:

- **Natural History Museum:** Discover the wonders of the natural world.
- **The National Gallery:** See a collection of over 2,300 European paintings dating from the mid-13th century to 1900.
- **Tate Modern:** Displays modern and contemporary art from around the globe.
- **The British Museum:** Explores human history and culture, featuring exhibits like the Rosetta Stone and the Elgin Marbles.
- **Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A):** Explore the world's largest museum of applied and decorative arts and design.

## Shopping

The best places to shop in London depend on what you're looking for. Whether you want high-street fashion, luxury brands, vintage pieces or something more unique, you'll find plenty of options:

### For high-street fashion and general shopping:

- **Oxford Street:** High-street brands. It can get very busy, so going early or on weekdays is helpful.
- **Regent Street:** Well-known international brands and beautiful architecture.
- **Westfield:** Large indoor malls in Shepherd's Bush and Stratford with a wide range of high street and designer shops.

### For vintage, antiques and a unique shopping experience:

- **Brick Lane Market:** Great for vintage clothing, street art, and global food.
- **Camden Market:** Alternative fashion, vintage stalls, gifts, and food.
- **Carnaby Street:** Trendy boutiques with a creative, independent feel
- **Covent Garden:** Market stalls, boutique shops, handmade crafts, and street performers.
- **Portobello Road Market:** Known for antiques and vintage clothing.
- **Spitalfields Market:** Mix of vintage, independent designers, and food stalls.

## Food Markets

London's food markets offer a vibrant mix of global cuisine, fresh produce, and street-food stalls, making them some of the best places in the city to explore new flavours and enjoy casual, affordable dining and diverse food options across London:

- **Arcade Food Hall, Oxford Street and Battersea Power Station:** A glamorous food hall which brings together the city's most exciting kitchens and inventive cocktails, under one roof.
- **Borough Market:** This historic market is known for its wide array of artisanal and gourmet foods.
- **Broadway Market, Hackney:** A bustling Victorian street market with over 70 shops, cafés and restaurants open seven days a week from dawn to dusk.
- **Camden Market Hawley Wharf, Camden:** A canal-side complex of quirky independent shops, eateries and experiences, including a Curzon cinema, situated on the edge of Regent's Canal.
- **Eataly, Liverpool Street:** This expansive food market next to Liverpool Street station, offers Italian cuisine in abundance.
- **Greenwich Market, Greenwich:** Dating back to the 18th century, this historic covered market is known for its treasure trove of antiques, crafts, clothing, trinkets and food.
- **KERB Seven Dials Market, Covent Garden:** Located in the heart of Covent Garden, this buzzy food hall is home to contemporary street-food retailers, with street-food kitchens downstairs and terrazzo countertop cafes upstairs.
- **Kingly Court, Soho:** Nestled within a side street off the famous Carnaby Street, centered around an open-air courtyard with brightly painted shopfronts and critically acclaimed restaurants.
- **Market Halls (Paddington, Victoria, Oxford Street and Canary Wharf):** These smart food halls are fitted with street food kitchens and live music stages.
- **Mercato Metropolitano, Mayfair:** The most picturesque food hall situated in a former church on the edges of Mayfair.
- **Netil Market, London Fields:** This small open-air market offers a delectable range of foodie treats.
- **Old Spitalfields Market, Spitalfields:** One of the oldest and most popular markets, Spitalfields is a seven-day-a-week destination filled with independent retail stalls and permanent street food traders under one large roof.

## Parks

London is one of the greenest capitals in the world, with many beautiful large parks perfect for relaxing, picnics, and walks:

- **Richmond Park:** The largest of London's Royal Parks and a national nature reserve where you can spot wild deer.
- **Regent's Park:** Features beautiful gardens, a boating lake, and an open-air theater.
- **Greenwich Park:** Provides excellent views of the London skyline and is home to the Royal Observatory and the Prime Meridian Line.