



# Relocation Guide

London 2021

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# Welcome to London

London has a lot to offer and we have created this guide to help you decide on, or prepare for your move to this amazing city. A thriving economy, social diversity, quality of life, and fantastic job opportunities make London a popular destination for talented digital experts from around the world. If you have not found your next career step yet, we are happy to advise and help you. Start creating your future at [www.welovesalt.com](http://www.welovesalt.com).





# Why move to London?

For centuries, London has been seen as the capital city of the world; leading in numerous industries from education to entertainment, finance to fashion — to name a few. It is a melting pot of nationalities and cultures, and has a high population growth rate year-on-year, as more people flock to the ever-evolving city to fulfil their personal and professional dreams.

London has become a great base for many of the leading start-ups in digital, FTSE 100 global companies, award-winning agencies, and established global businesses.

Match this with an excellent standard of living and leisure opportunities, and you've got the perfect location to relocate to.





# Living in London

## The economy and work culture

Despite recent political changes, the economy is still strong with large organisations pledging their commitment to London, and many start-ups continuing to pick London as the base of their operations.

Even though Brexit changes have caused uncertainty for businesses, London has proven time and time again to be resilient to change.

London is one of Europe's, if not one of the world's most important hubs for industries like finance, media, technology, and manufacturing. The city boasts a thriving culture and art scene, is a true "foodie" haven, and is one of the key tourist destinations of the world.

London has long been an attractive place to work and play for people from all around the world, which has led to a diverse population and workforce. English is the main language used by most professionals but you will hear many different languages in the street.

### General information:

**Population:** 9,426,000

**Metro Area:** 8,382 km<sup>2</sup>

**Time zone:** UTC Greenwich Mean Time, UTC+1 British Summer Time

**Currency:** British Pound Sterling (GBP)

**Number of restaurants with one or more Michelin stars:** 66

**Number of pubs:** 3,500+

**Diversity:** 36.4% of London's population are non-native

## Cost of transport

Public transport in London is excellent and extensive. It is managed by Transport for London, which has a user-friendly, multilingual website with a journey planner, maps, detailed information on every mode of transport in the capital, and live updates on traffic.

The cheapest way to get around London is with an Oyster Card or a UK contactless card (foreign currency cardholders should check for contactless charges first).

Paper tickets still exist and although Day Travelcards cost the same on paper as an Oyster or contactless card, using paper singles or returns is substantially more expensive than using an Oyster.

The tube, DLR and Overground network are ideal for getting across different parts of the city; buses and the Santander Cycles are great for shorter journeys. Many parts of the city have recently introduced electric bikes for rent and e-scooters.

Uber, Bolt, black cabs and other local taxi companies operate also. It's not hard to find modes of transport in the city!



**Tim's insider tip:** If you don't know your way around, make sure to download the app [Citymapper](#) to navigate the city like a Londoner.

## Cost of accommodation

The cost of accommodation in London is relatively high compared to the rest of the UK but you can expect to find moderately priced accommodation the further out of the city you go. Take your time to check out different boroughs to find the part of the city where you feel at home. Most young people who move to London house share to meet new people and have a lower rent.

You can use websites like Spareroom (link this to: [www.spareroom.co.uk](http://www.spareroom.co.uk)), OpenRent (link to: [www.openrent.co.uk](http://www.openrent.co.uk)), Zoopla (link to: [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)) or Foxtons ([www.foxtons.co.uk](http://www.foxtons.co.uk)) to find accommodation. Be prepared to pay a deposit of up to 6 weeks rent. If you use an agency, expect to also pay agency and reference fees.

## Cost of living

Sounds great you might think, but can I afford living in London? Here is some guidance on cost of living: according to ECA International's latest cost of living report, London has dropped out of the 100 most expensive cities to live in thanks to the weakened British Pound. This is its lowest ranking in a decade, dropping behind Bangkok, Rio de Janeiro and Dublin for the first time in years. However, this still means that London is in line with other capital cities' cost of living. Few things come for free in London and there is so much to experience that you will notice your money can run through your hands fast. The standard VAT rate is 20%.



**Emma's insider tip:** Look out for discounts, there are sales every other week, so be sure to buy when on offer and save money.

There are apps and promotions everywhere; like [Dusk](#), or [TimeOut offers](#) which help you save money – after all, every little helps.



## Cost of education

Free education is provided in state schools in your local area however there are also a lot of private institutions.

Consult with friends, do some research before you decide – London has a great spectrum of different schools, from nursery, private, boarding school, international schools but they all come at a price, so be prepared to invest in your little ones.



## Cost of food

London is one of the best cities to experience the variety of different cuisines. You will not be short of finding your favourite cuisine in London while trying new flavours in Little Italy, Chinatown, Korea town or at the food markets with fare from around the world.

There are Streetfood markets on every corner, weekly Farmer's markets, and a range of supermarkets as well as many local shops catering to different tastes and price range.

You can find many good deals on places to eat around London through [TimeOut](#).



**Oliver's insider tip:** Where to pick for my top spot of where to eat in London...

Exmouth market, north of central London, is a great street filled with restaurants and street food vendors during lunch time. I recommend going to Shawarma Berber & Q to sit in; they do middle eastern rotisserie and shawarma (some of the best chicken I have ever had) inspired by the streets of Tel Aviv.

To the centre of London, Lina Stores, an Italian institution in Soho does amazing small plates and in the same area is Mildreds, a delicious vegetarian and vegan restaurant with one of the best sweet potato curries I've ever had.

To the east is some of the most authentic Thai I've ever had. Be sure to book to avoid disappointment.

Being a South Londoner, my two regulars are Ben's Canteen, an Aussie-inspired neighbourhood hangout that does a fantastic brunch. My second favourite place in South London is No 32 The Old Town which does an excellent breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner and Sunday roast. Take your pick, you will not be disappointed.

To the west there is a great pub on the water called The Crabtree, they do great BBQ food and have an excellent beer garden area for summer.



## Culture shock

London can be a home away from home as it is blessed with many different nationalities and cultures allowing you to find fellow expats from your own country while enjoying experiencing new cultures for the first time.

However, there are some things that people find challenging when they first arrive in London or the UK: London is very crowded, you can escape to the parks to get some space and fresh air. London's tube during rush hour is even more crowded, be patient and follow the TFL's instructions. Popular places and events will either require you to book in advance or you will need to queue, sometimes hours just to have lunch. In restaurants, wait to be seated; in pubs, remember to order at the bar. Be polite, say sorry in case you bump into someone or need to pass by someone in a crowded place.



## Safety

London is a fairly safe city for its size, so exercising common sense should keep you secure. If you're getting a cab after a night's clubbing, make sure you go for a black taxi or a licensed minicab firm. Many of the touts operating outside clubs and bars are unlicensed and can therefore be unsafe. Pickpocketing does happen in London, so keep an eye on your handbag and wallet, especially in bars and nightclubs, and in crowded areas such as the underground.



## Banking

In the UK, you have two choices of banking. You can set up an account with a bank or with a building society. There are also options to do all your banking online.

For personal banking, the account you'll most likely require is called a current account (perhaps known as a checking account in your home country).

To open an account, you will have to provide documents for proof of ID and proof of address which can be challenging when you have just moved to the UK. Your passport will suffice for proof of ID, and most people use a utility bill issued within the last three months for proof of address. Monzo bank can be a lot easier to open for expats as all you need is ID and an UK address to send your card to, plus it helps you budget! Lloyds Bank and Metro often have special offers for expats too.



## Money

The British pound (GBP) or the pound sterling are the official currency of the United Kingdom. Check local currency exchange for the most up-to-date rate. The pound is easily transferred from other currencies, with many currency exchanges around London. Alternatively, there are many currency exchange online banking services such as [transferwise.com](https://www.transferwise.com).







# Healthcare

Healthcare in England is mainly provided by the country's public health service, the [National Health Service \(NHS\)](#), which provides healthcare to all permanent residents of the United Kingdom and is free at the point of use, as it is paid for from general taxation. In addition to the NHS, there are private healthcare providers, doctors, and hospitals which would not be covered by the NHS.

EU nationals can obtain free emergency treatment (and, in some cases, reduced-cost healthcare) on presentation of a [European Health Insurance Card](#).

Reciprocal arrangements with the UK allow Australians, New Zealanders and residents and nationals of several other countries to receive free emergency medical treatment and subsidised dental care through the NHS. They can use hospital emergency departments, GPs and dentists. For a full list click on 'Services near you' on the NHS website. Visitors staying 12 months or longer, with the proper documentation, will receive care under the NHS by registering with a specific practice near their residence.

Travel insurance is advisable for non-EU residents as it offers greater flexibility over where and how you're treated and covers expenses for an ambulance and repatriation that will not be picked up by the NHS.

## Hospitals

Some hospitals have 24-hour accident and emergency departments.

However, in an emergency just call **999** and an ambulance will normally be dispatched from the hospital nearest to you.



## Recreation

There are countless indoor and outdoor activities around London, catering to every need and taste. London literally has something for everyone; museums, exhibitions, a plethora of concert venues large and small, theatres, numerous green spaces to enjoy outdoor pursuits, the list is endless. It is safe to say you will not be stuck for options to do. Again, TimeOut Magazine is a good starting point to find out what's happening in the city.

London is a great connecting city to the rest of the UK and Europe, with cheap flights to capital cities and the EuroStar, allowing you to use London as a base of operations to explore.



## Shopping

London is a fashion capital with a range of local independents to large malls (i.e. Westfield) and street markets such as the famous alternative Camden market and fashionable Portobello market. Oxford Circus and Covent Garden are the main shopping hubs in central London with a mix of high street retailers and is also located near high fashion Mayfair area where you can find some of the world's popular fashion designer boutiques. You will find shopping and high street retailers in every borough and might enjoy shopping off the beaten track more than in central London. Highlights are Shoreditch, Notting Hill, Hampstead, Holborn, just to name a few.



**Lizzie's insider tip:** London is just too busy. If you want to keep up with the latest fashion, just order online, for example at [asos.com](https://www.asos.com).

## Dress code & greetings

Dress code in London is like most cosmopolitan cities – in London you could say anything goes. There is a wealth of creative fashionistas so you will find lots of interesting street style. Most businesses will have a smart casual attire but you will also find conservative businesses with stricter, more formal dress codes.

In business a polite demeanour is standard and when meeting someone a handshake is normal practice. Personal space is highly regarded, so the European practice of “social kissing” often leads to awkward moments and confusion whether 1, 2 or 3 kisses on the cheek are expected. Our suggestion is to save it for friends and fellow countrymen.





# Working in London

Most businesses in London have a strong work culture which is very much aligned with a work hard, play hard mentality.

Most businesses will expect you to do 9-5, maintaining the work life balance but other organisations can expect an “always on” mentality which is normally compensated with excellent benefits and perks.

Most Londoners enjoy a standard leave package of, on average, 23-25 days minimum.

# Have fun exploring London!

If you are looking to relocate to London and have not found your next career step yet, we are happy to advise and help you. Start creating your future at [www.welovesalt.com](http://www.welovesalt.com).

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