



# 101 LONDON TRAVEL TIPS

BY  
ANGLOTOPIA

101  
London  
Travel  
Tips

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# 101 London Travel Tips

By  
Anglotopia

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ANGLOTORIA

JOHN GOATS FERRY

# Introduction to the 2nd Edition

When we wrote the first edition of 101 London Travel Tips circa 2010, things were much different for London and for us. We were starting out as a business and London hadn't yet hosted the 2012 Olympics. A few months ago I was reading through the old book and realized that it was woefully out of date and needed an update.

We think of London as our second home. The idea of the original book came from various mishaps on the travels that we had while exploring this great city. We've traveled to London 20 times now, and we've learned something new on every trip.

This book will help you easily navigate through London's quirks. Keep in mind that as you travel you are, in fact, traveling. You have chosen a vacation to immerse yourself in a new culture. If you're open-minded and relaxed, you will have a wonderful time.

Tourists travel from around the globe to see the treasures that London holds. Make sure to get out and see the city. Take full advantage of all of the free attractions and fantastic parks. Take in a nice cup of tea at teatime or have a pint in a pub. Fully immerse yourself in the culture and you will have a fabulous time. We promise.

London is a unique melting pot of cultures and people. You will encounter people from across the globe in London. Some are the nicest people on Earth, and others leave something to be desired. Just be polite, and remember a smile goes a long way.

I'm writing this in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, and many of us are missing London dearly. We don't know when we'll be going back but we know that, with this guidebook in hand, you will be London ready when you can!

Bon Voyage!

Jonathan and Jackie Thomas  
Publishers  
Anglotopia



# I . PACK LIGHT FOR LONDON

**B**y far, the worst part of traveling to Britain is dealing with luggage. It's heavy and hard to get through airports, the Tube, and around London's bumpy sidewalks. Now that airlines charge extra for heavier luggage and extra bags, it's just not worth the added cost and trouble.

Our travel philosophy is that less is more when it comes to packing for London.

You don't need to take as much with you as you think. London hotels are small, and there won't be much room for massive luggage. Redefine what you think is essential when traveling and try to keep everything down to one carry-on and one checked bag. In recent years, we've dispensed with the checked bag altogether. We buy the biggest regulation carry-on bag, and then take only a carry-on with us (one for each of us). We've found carry-on only travel to be liberating. We move through the airport so much faster, and you don't have to worry about your bag getting lost (which has happened to us more than once). Inevitably, you'll come home with more things than when you arrived, so we recommend a cheap collapsible duffel or something similar. Check that on the way home.

Pack simply, plan your outfits in advance, be willing to mix and match. Try to keep shoes to a minimum. We usually take one pair of good walking shoes and a pair of dressier shoes.

If you want to pack really light, don't be afraid to do a load of laundry during your trip. Most hotels have facilities, and most neighborhoods have a laundromat. It's a great way to meet some locals. If you stay in self-catering accommodation, you'll usually have your own washing facilities.



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WELLSINGTON

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LONDON

## 2. YOU CAN BUY IT THERE!

It's tempting to think that you need to bring everything with you along with the kitchen sink. London is in a foreign country, and you absolutely need the specific haircare or skincare products you rely on. But you can buy pretty much anything in London that you can buy in a drugstore back home. Plus, it's a lot of fun to go into a British Boots or Superdrug and explore the miles of shelves to get some new toiletries.

Once, when our bags were lost, we had to go out and buy essentials like a change of clothes or two and some toiletries, and it is one of our favorite London memories. Now, when I pack for trips to London, I think really long and hard about whether I really need it all, and if I do, can I just get it there? If you travel with a carry-on only, this is the easiest way to get around TSA liquid regulations.

You may also discover wonderful new products that you'll end up using instead. My favorite soap, for example, comes from the Muji store on Long Acre in Covent Garden. Every time I'm in London I stock up and buy loads!

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100% PURE SQUEEZED FRUIT

Each 150ml serving contains

273 kJ 65 kcal	Fat 0g	Saturated 0g	Sugars 13g	Salt 0g
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# 3. GROCERIES & SNACKING

Every neighborhood in London has a corner shop, a grocery store or, if it sells alcohol, an off-license or ‘offy’ for short. So if you want to save a ton of money eating, then we recommend stopping in on your first day in London.

Going to a grocery store and stocking up on snacks will save you a lot of money on meals, especially if you plan picnics. It’s a great way to save money on food, which will be your highest cost while in London after lodging. You get the fun bonus of browsing the shelves in a British grocery store and seeing what the British like to eat and try some new things yourself.

If you have self-catering accommodation and can cook for yourself, stores like Marks & Spencer have daily deals where you can get an entire meal for two for just £10, including entree, dessert, and wine. It’s a great deal for tasty food. You’ll pay more at stores like Harrods, Waitrose, etc.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so we always stock up on foods like muffins, fruits, and cereal. That way, we get a good breakfast in the room and, when we leave the hotel, we’re fueled up for a full day of London sightseeing.

It’s also nice to have healthy snacks on hand; sightseeing makes you hungry, and when it’s 9 o’clock at night and you’re exhausted and hungry, a bag of grapes or an apple goes a long way to staying healthy while you’re traveling.





# 4. DEALING WITH THE RAIN

**D**espite the popular myth, it doesn't rain ALL the time in London. In fact, most of the year, London has pretty fair weather. Believe it or not, in 2012, London was under drought conditions! However, it COULD rain at any time, so carry a small umbrella with you. I purchased a nice travel umbrella online, it collapses into a very small package and fits into my carry-on. I'm always ready for rain when I travel to London. Carrying an umbrella won't look stupid, you look prepared. Bit of warning - if you ever do buy a really nice umbrella - be prepared to ship it home if it doesn't fit in your luggage, they won't let you take it through the security checkpoint. We learned this the hard way and once had to CHECK an umbrella. That had to be weird to load onto the plane!



# 5.

## CLOCKS & 24-HOUR TIME

**L**ike the rest of Europe, the British use the 24-hour clock (aka military time) and the 12-hour clock interchangeably. Often you'll find TV and theatre showtimes quoted in 12-hour time, while trains and bus schedules will be in 24-hour time. This inevitably leads to confusion amongst travelers in London.

The solution is simple. The easiest way to translate the different clocks is this: subtract 12 from whatever the 24-hour time is. For example 23:00 = 11:00pm.

Another handy tip for dealing with this is to switch your phone to 24-hour time when you arrive in London; then, you can acclimate to it.

The old adage of 'measure twice, cut once' can definitely be adapted to London travel 'check the time twice, book once.'



# 6.

# CURRENCY & CARDS

**B**efore traveling to London, we recommend getting a credit or debit card that does not have foreign transaction fees. There are plenty out there - the British Airways Chase Visa comes to mind immediately. My business bank card has foreign transaction fees, and these can add up to a sizable amount of money when we're traveling. Also, warn your bank that you'll be traveling.

After dragging their feet for what seemed like forever, American banks are finally moving their credit cards to chip & pin, which has been the standard in Britain for a long time. Though most cards are actually 'chip & sign,' which will irritate checkout staff as they always struggle to find a pen. But you no longer have to swipe your card, which makes things much smoother. The British have adopted contactless cards as well, and American banks have adopted those much faster. You can easily tap your card in Britain these days, and that's it.

You can buy British money here in the USA from various sources, but honestly, in this day and age, just wait until you get there and get it out of the ATM. ATMs give you that day's exchange rate, and most banks won't charge a fee for it. Though after years of travel, we have a small kitty of British money we take with us on every trip.

The British are very proud of their currency, the pound sterling. And now that Britain is leaving the EU at the end of this year, 2020, they will never adopt the Euro. The bills have changed in recent years. They're no longer made of paper but plastic. The bills in Scotland and Northern Ireland look different (and you may struggle to use them in England).

Many stores will also process the credit card transaction in dollars these days, but keep in mind that this is just another way for the store to make more money, and you're not guaranteed to get the best exchange rate by doing this. When in doubt, pay in pounds, whether you pay in cash or swipe.

In recent years, we've relied on the Transferwise service for our British money travel needs. Open to Americans, you can sign up for a free account, then carry a bank balance in British pounds. They also provide you with a chip & pin debit card that you can use while you're traveling in Britain. This makes it ridiculously easy as you pay for things like a local. On our next trip, we'll just load all our spending money on it and use that for expenses and to get cash out of the ATM. You'll save loads on fees and checkout staff won't get annoyed when they have to find a pen.