



Living in
LONDON

THE VERTO EXPERIENCE
LOCATION GUIDE



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Life in *London!*

London is one of the world's leading capitals, and it's a stunning multicultural city that has everything you can think of. There is a saying that if you're tired of London, that means, you're tired of life. Well, it's a joke, of course... but if you think about it – London has it all! London is home to 32 boroughs, and many different neighborhood styles that can affect your entire relationship with the city!



What will *London* be like?

London is an incredibly vibrant, exciting, culturally rich and cosmopolitan city. With more than eight million people living, studying and working here, London is also a fast paced, hectic and busy city and for many overseas students. It can take some time to adjust to the way of life.

While you are here, you will be immersed in the life of the city – and use it as your classroom! You will be offered chances to visit sites not known to the average tourist, and will have the opportunity to attend lectures and events which will engage you in vital and contemporary issues such as multiculturalism, immigration, and identity. Take every chance to open your mind to new people, new ideas and new cultures!

London is historically an overcrowded but lively city, and Britain in general is a small island with a large population. Your housing may be smaller than you are used to and this means you may have less personal space and less storage space for clothes. Sharing an apartment with new people can also seem daunting when you first arrive; you will need to be flexible to ensure you all get along.

There are over 7,000 pubs, over 5,000 restaurants, and incredibly for one city, over 350 music venues! Living on a student budget can be hard, especially in a big city, however there's plenty to do when you're watching a bank balance; think coffee shops, exercise clubs or taking time out of your busy schedule to enjoy one of the many leafy parks.



Boroughs & Neighborhoods in *London*



Neighborhoods in London make up a unique part of the city's culture. The city is so huge that being in different areas can feel like living in different cities! Each borough has an average population of 275,000 residents, with many smaller neighborhoods within each borough. Each one has its own vibe, quirks, and personality, and it will be a fun opportunity for you to get to know some of them! Neighborhoods in London are anchors for identity and social connection, and provide space for participation, shared experiences and opportunities to build positive relationships. Your Student Life Coordinator will help you to navigate life in these neighborhoods, and support you in developing your own London identity.

An area that you will spend much of your time in is Bloomsbury - a fashionable residential area, which is home to numerous cultural, intellectual, and educational institutions. Historically, Bloomsbury is associated with the arts, education, and medicine, but also boasts pockets of beautiful green space sprinkled amongst the lofty buildings, adding charm and character to the area. The area is also a hotspot for culture and the base for several museums and galleries, which you will be able to explore during your time in London.

Bloomsbury harbours some of the coolest, oldest and most prestigious schools and colleges in the whole of the UK, let alone London. The University of London has made Bloomsbury the base for a number of its

colleges, including the rather amazing London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. This world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health is home to clinicians, epidemiologists, statisticians, social scientists, molecular biologists and immunologists all working to improve health worldwide. It received its royal charter as part of the University of London in 1924.

It's also home to some of the most beautiful parks and gardens in the whole of London. It's well known for its truly picturesque foliage filled squares – a welcome distraction in an otherwise blurry backdrop of industrial grey. Perhaps the most famous square in Bloomsbury is Russell Square. A stones throw from Russell Square tube station, this grand open space was created at the same time as Bloomsbury Square in the early 1800's and was described in 1830 as "a pleasant retreat from the cares of business." Framed with pretty Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian buildings, it's still a pretty cool place to be today.



The Pros of Living in London



- London is charming! Despite losing a lot of its historical buildings in the Great Fire of 1666 and then during the WWII bombings, it still has plenty of great architecture to offer. Moreover, every district of London is different. Take Spitalfields with its signature dark brick buildings, compared to the sparkling white terraces of Queensway and Paddington. However, London is way more than that! There is Richmond, Hampstead, Kensington, Notting Hill, Camden, Brixton and much much more!
- Fantastic food from all over the world! Do you want Ethiopian food today? Head to Camberwell! Fancy Brazilian cuisine? – Well, you can go to Kensal Rise or Wembley. Fancy a great kebab? – East London has you covered. Are you looking for the best vegan burger? You can find them all around London! London is also known for its delicious Indian food, so head to Brick Lane for the best curry you have ever tasted!
- London is a transport and international hub! If you're obsessed with travel, then you will be happy to live in London with its six airports and connections to pretty much every country you can think of.
- There's always something to do! London pretty much never sleeps with 24hr bus service every day and 24hr underground services on certain days. There are plenty of restaurants that are open 24 hours, seven days a week, and you can always find things to do in the city. It has so many interesting museums (most of them are free), art galleries, workshops, excursions and more!



Packing for your Experience



Here are some helpful tips for smart packing as part of your experience:

- Don't pack more than you can carry! You may have heard this before, but it becomes a reality when you arrive and need to carry your suitcases.
- Be selective in what you pack! Space is of a premium in London and storage space will therefore be very limited in your residence. The more you pack, the less personal space you will have in your apartments.
- You may wish to change a little money (maybe \$150 USD) into British Pounds (GBP) before you leave the US so you have some cash on arrival for travel if you need it. There are ATMs at the airport, but ensure that your PIN is only four digits. Please note that you will not be able to put USD into your bank account while you are here - so keep that in mind when bringing cash.



The Arrival Process and Orientation



The Verto London team will support you in the arrival process and ensure that you become familiar with London living. Staff will greet you at the airport upon your arrival, and help you to your Verto-arranged transport to your accommodation.

Your first week in London will involve a detailed orientation into the semester ahead, including a tour of your local area, health and safety information, how to use public transportation, programming activities, academic expectations, and community events. This orientation process will help you to meet the challenges of living in a new culture.

Verto London staff are also here to support you throughout your experience, and to help you adjust as you learn and grow! Your goals for your time in London should be shaped at all times by what you can learn from your classes, the Verto London staff, and your surroundings. Immerse yourself fully into British life and culture – it has much to teach you!



SIM Cards

You will be able to purchase a UK SIM card at all major grocery stores across London. These are easy to top up with data to use throughout your time in London. Please remember to ensure that your phone is unlocked in the weeks leading up to the semester. You will not be able to use a UK SIM without having done this process.



Getting Around in *London*

There are SO many options for getting around London! As ride-sharing and black cabs are common (but expensive), you'll find yourself walking around the city (a lot!). However, the most popular form of transport in London is the public transportation system. As part of your Verto experience, you will receive an Oyster Card, which is your pass to and around the city. Your Oyster Card is preloaded for inner zones (zones 1 and 2) tube travel for the duration of your program and for bus travel in all zones. Using public transportation in London will be a new skill for you to develop, but will soon become a part of your everyday life. The Underground (tube) can certainly be busy, hot and frustrating at times. However, the tube is actually a perfect place to observe British "privateness" – note how quiet people tend to be, immersed in the free newspapers such as the Metro or the Evening Standard, and how eye contact is avoided, even in rush hour. You will also find it easier than you might expect to walk around Central London. It is worth noting that the average commute for a Londoner from their house to work is between 30 and 60 minutes. So expect travel to be a part of your daily life!



Diversity in *London*



London sees YOU! One of the most appealing aspects of London is its diversity. There is an extraordinary range of different lifestyles, faiths, and ethnic groups represented in the city. In recent decades, it has become one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world. At the 2011 census, London had a population of 8,173,941. Of this number 44.9% were White British, 37% of the population were born outside the UK, including 24.5% born outside of Europe. As you walk the streets, you will realize that being 'British' means many different things. By embracing diversity and multiculturalism, you will deepen your appreciation of London and the UK.

Budget *Guidelines*

As part of our London experience, you are required to purchase your own groceries, cleaning, and personal supplies. You have access to a fully equipped kitchen to prepare meals, and don't forget the array of cafes and restaurants that London is home to. Based on information from participants on previous semesters, the average cost of groceries and eating out was \$50-100 (USD) per week, with the average meal out costing \$15-20 (USD). Social activities cost \$30-\$90 (USD) per week, personal expenses (clothes, home goods, souvenirs) are an average of \$50 (USD) per week, and (optional) independent travel can cost anywhere between \$60-\$250 (USD) per week. While costs can add up quickly in London, it can be done on a budget! Your Student Life Coordinator will be able to help you with creating a budget to ensure that you're able to live within your means during your time abroad.



Your Academic Center

You will travel from your accommodations for class to the London Academic Center. You will see very quickly that the Center is NOT a campus, but a large building housing classrooms, social space and staff offices.

There are not many campus Universities in London so as you journey to and from the center, the experience is much like any other London student's. Very quickly, the Center will become a home away from home; where you can chat with staff, take your classes and socialize with other participants.



If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to reach out to your Student Onboarding Advisor.

*We can't wait to welcome you to **London!***



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