

LONDON

Welcome to London, the cultural and political capital of Great Britain, a cosmopolitan city of eight million people where you will find excitement day and night, even when the well-known English rain won't let up.

TRANSPORTATION

The top deck on one of London's red, double-decker buses is a great way of seeing the city's most famous sights. One short bus ride costs 70p. Even though some stops are mandatory, it's always a good idea to put out your arm when you see the bus coming so it won't pass you by. But it won't stop if it's full. The Underground (or "the tube", as it's affectionately known in London) runs from 5:30 am to midnight. It is a very convenient and fast way of getting around London, with stops at all the major sights. It costs £1.50 for one ride.

You can save money by buying all-day tickets for unlimited travel on the bus and tube. A "Visitor Travelcard" can only be purchased outside Britain and is valid for 1, 2, 3, 4, or 7 days, while a "Travelcard", available at underground ticket offices, is used by the day, weekend, week, month or year. The "One Day Travelcard" costs £3.90 and the "Weekend Travelcard" is £5.80. For the "Travelcards" you will need a passport photo. Try not to use the bus or tube during rush hour, from 7:30-9:30 am and 4:30-6:30 pm. Also, if you are driving, remember to drive on the left side!

BANKS AND CURRENCY

Banks are open weekdays from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm, with some branches open Saturday morning. There are 24-hour banks at Heathrow and

Gatwick airports.

English money comes in different colors, sizes and metals. Bills: £5 (blue), £10 (brown), £20 (blue) and £50 (brown). Coins: 1p and 2p (copper); 5p, 10p, 20p (silver); £1 (gold), £2 (silver and gold). 100 pence equal £1.

POSTAGE

Post offices are open weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm, and Saturday mornings.

TELEPHONES

One local phone call costs 10p, but it's a good idea to buy a phone card at a news agent. If you want to call the United States, use a public phone which is cheaper than calling from your hotel room. To call home, dial 001 + area code + number.

SHOPPING

Where to begin? Maybe at the world-famous **Harrods** in Knightsbridge, or the **Covent Garden**, a shopping mall with restaurants, stores, and bars. Stroll down **Oxford Street**, renowned for its fashion, shoe shops and large department stores, or **Piccadilly** where you will find the great department store **Fortnum & Mason**.

EATING

After shopping you will definitely need something to eat. If it's pizza that you want, try the **Pizza-Pizza-Pizza** chain or the **Pizza Pie Factory** in Hanover Square. For something fancier, there is the **Pavilion Restaurant** (well-known for its wine bar) at Finsbury Circus Gdns.; **La Tante Claire** at 68 Royal Hospital Rd., SW3 (try to go for lunch if you're on a budget, because the fixed-price

menu is half the price of dinner). For traditional English food (roasts, pies, steamed pudding) try **Walton's** at 121 Walton Street, SW3.

In England, do as the English do, and have afternoon tea. Some places to try are **The Ritz** and **The Meridien** hotels where you can have tea with creamcakes and sandwiches; the **Ceylon Tea Center** at 22 Regent St; or **Fortnum & Mason** at Piccadilly.

And have a drink at an English pub; some pubs also serve cheap lunch or dinner. Try **The Imperial Arms** at 577 King's Road, SW6 for some good home-cooking.

PARKS AND GARDENS

In **Hyde Park**, you can get on a soap box and speak your mind. Someone might even listen to you. At **Regent's Park** there's an open-air theater in the summer, and you can rent rowing boats.

NIGHTLIFE

Dance the night away at **Stringfellows** in Upper St. Martin's Lane; upstairs is a French restaurant and bar, and downstairs is a dazzling disco with a glass dance floor. And the **Hippodrome** at Charing Cross road has a spectacular light show and moving stage.

To find out about entertainment in London, pick up **Time Out** or **What's on in London**.

PLACES TO VISIT

Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, Tower of London, London Zoo, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, Guinness World of Records Museum, and more!