

London To-Do List

Pre-Departure

1. Obtain passport and make copies. Bring both with you.
2. Print at least 4 passport-sized photos (head shots).
3. Obtain and break-in **COMFORTABLE** walking shoes. Some walkable streets in the UK are cobblestone, which is extremely hard on your feet!
4. Make sure your credit card PIN is only four digits. Longer PINs won't work in European ATMs. Also choose a card with a low or zero foreign transaction fee. Most fees are 1% to 3%. *[Also see #8 below.]*
5. Make sure your charette group brings at least two laptops that are capable of putting together a presentation. Also video Skyping home costs way less than phoning! You can use your smart phone for web access, but it probably won't be compatible with European phone services. You might want to investigate cell phone options for the UK and Europe.
6. You may want to obtain some UK currency (or Euros, if needed) before you leave. U.S. Bank will allow you to specify denominations of the bills, so you can get £5 & £10 notes. There is a flat fee involved, so it might be wise to make a group purchase of currency.
7. Create a trip book (print or digital, but not web-based) so you'll know **when** and **where** you're going each day and how you're getting there, including how much time it will take. Then add a 15-minute cushion to ensure that you're on time.
8. **Purchase train tickets 12 weeks in advance for the lowest fare.** Remember to indicate 16–25 Rail Card. Fill out the Rail Card application (and mature student confirmation form if you're older than 25) in advance. Book trains through <http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/> [Cheapest fares, U.S. credit cards ok.] Choose to pick up your tickets at Euston Station (closest to Passfield) or Edinburgh Waverley anytime before your train trip. You'll need to have the credit/debit card you used to purchase the tickets in order to collect them from the machine at the station.
9. For train travel to **Oxford and Nottingham**, make sure you **purchase the Plus Bus option**, which allows you unrestricted bus travel for the day in your destination city. It's about £2.65 extra and well worth it!



Upon Arrival

1. Purchase your 16–25 Rail Card from a staffed railroad station (all London stations (except Heathrow) and Edinburgh Waverley) ticket office. You'll need to show the station attendant your passport and international student ID as well as provide a passport-sized photo and completed application form, available at the station. You can't purchase the rail card on-line. It costs £30.

You must have the Rail Card with you when you travel, or you'll have to make up the considerable difference in fares between your discounted ticket and the standard ticket price. That's over £100 for the Wales trip! It'll also save you money on other rail trips in the U.K. you'll need to take for the course as well as for your own pleasure. (Imagine a return journey to Edinburgh for £17! Book early!)



2. At your first London tube station (at Heathrow if you arrive there), buy an Oyster. It's £5 (refundable). Put £30 pay-as-you-go cash value on it. You can purchase it at one of the machines or from the station attendant. The Oyster is a smart card that ensures you always pay the lowest fare for single trips or for all trips on the day or week. See <<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14825.aspx>> for details. And you can set the Railcard discount concession on your Oyster to get discounts on off-peak travel. See <<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/railcards?intcmp=1757#on-this-page-7>>.

With your Railcard registered on your Oyster the daily cap for tube, DLR, and overground travel in zones 1–2 is £6.40 at peak times, £4.25 off-peak. If you're not going to use it every day, putting the £30 in pay-as-you-go value on the Oyster is probably less expensive and more flexible (no time limit) than a 7-day Travel Card for Zones 1–2 (£32.10). In zones 1–2 an off-peak single tube trip is £1.50; on peak £2.90. If you pay with cash, a single trip is £4.80. Bus trips are £1.50 regardless of zone or time. You need an Oyster or Travel Card to ride the bus—no cash fares. You can get an extra 34% discount on off-peak pay-as-you-go travel and day travel cards if you register your oyster card and claim the discount entitlement. To register your Oyster card you will need to go to a Tube Station Ticket Office and ask for an 'Oyster Registration' form (not available online). Fill this out and hand it over, along with your card. Once your Oyster card is registered it is protected from theft or loss and you'll get the discount! *You must have the Rail Card with you when you travel.*

You can also use Oyster pay-as-you-go for discounted travel on the Emirates Airline, which flies between North Greenwich and the Royal Docks at a discount, single fare is £3.40 vs. £4.50 cash. With a journey time of less than 10 minutes, Emirates Air Line provides easy access to the North Greenwich Arena and Excel Centre. The terminals are also close to the Tube, DLR, buses, and river boat services.



Read Transport for London's Card Clash info to prevent embarrassment and over charging! See <<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/oyster/using-oyster/card-clash>>. Hint: Keep your Oyster separate from other touch cards.