

# London



**Bespoke guide for  
Oxford Royale  
students.**

**Explore popular areas  
in the city.**

**Discover the best sights,  
shops and cafes.**



## **London Guide VERSION 3**

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*The heart of British politics and the Royal Family, easily paired with a walk to world-famous department stores.*

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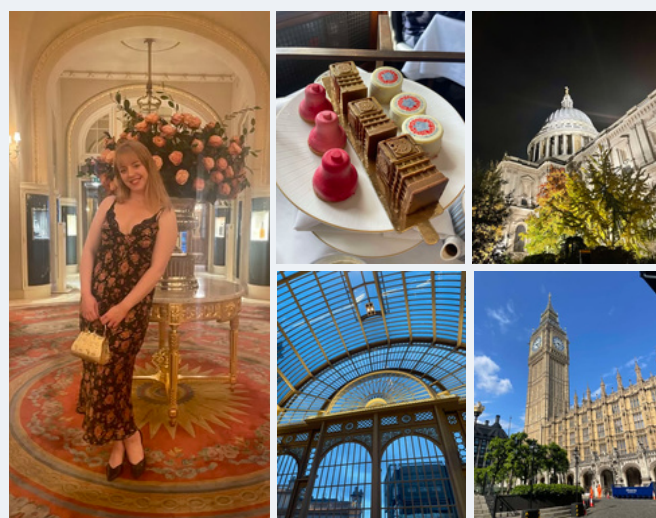
### 17 Journal

## MEET THE AUTHOR

When I was a student at Oxford, I travelled down to London almost every weekend to see something new and exciting. I wanted to create a guide for Oxford Royale students that draw on these experiences and inspire you to make equally wonderful memories as I have. I and most of my friends and classmates moved here to take on exciting graduate jobs in the city, so even now I continue to find something fascinating every time I leave my house. Countless weekend adventures have informed the itineraries for this guide, and I am so excited to share my highlights with you all. I hope you also discover your own hidden gems and share them for next year's group!

*Lisa Joan Ireland*

OXON Mst Modern Languages



# BEFORE YOU GO



## Do you have both cash and a payment card?

Most places in London will accept card, but carrying cash is a smart back-up option.



## Do you know who you're going with?

Saving your friends' numbers in your phone before you go is also a smart idea.

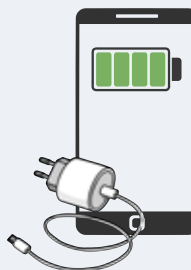
## Have you packed a bag with essentials?

Think sun cream, phone charger, wallet, umbrella, water bottle, hand sanitiser... what else?



## Have you checked the weather?

The British weather is unpredictable, make sure you're prepared.



## Is your phone fully charged?

Bring your charger just in case!



## Do you have a note of the Oxford Royale emergency number?

Having it on your phone as well as a written note will keep you safe.

## Do you know where you are going?

London, of course! But London is a big place, so make a rough plan using this guide if you're not familiar with it.



## Do you know what time you have to be back?

Make a note of it and plan travel times accordingly.

Be smart so you don't hold up your classmates; they won't appreciate waiting for you!



Happy Exploring!

# LONDON

## *A Very Condensed History*

London is an extraordinary city, with a history that began over 2000 years ago when the Romans settled in what was known as *Londinium* in 43 AD, though recent archaeological finds have found materials dating all the way back to 4500 BCE. Since then, the city has become a centre of trade, finance, journalism, history, politics, architecture, art and culture. London has always been a diverse, multicultural hub, and welcomes people and cultures from all over the world.

Around 180 AD-225 AD, the Romans built the London Wall, of which there are still remains today, and with which the city still defines its central area. London is, in fact, segregated into the City of London and City of Westminster, each sectioned with numerous 'boroughs', or neighbourhoods.

The city survived numerous tragedies, the most famous of which include the Plague, 1665-6, and the Great Fire of London, 1666, which broke out at a bakery on Pudding Lane and tore through 13,200 houses, 87 churches and even the spectacular St. Paul's Cathedral. Sir Christopher Wren, a notable architect, took over rebuilding the destroyed city and created many of the stunning buildings we still enjoy today. In more recent history, London was shaped by two world wars, with 60,000 citizens losing their lives during the Blitz, a violent bombing campaign over the city. Today, there are still signs of where the bombs exploded on buildings and walls. Incredibly, St. Paul's Cathedral was never hit and has become a symbol of London's strength, resilience and grandeur.



In the 1900s, London was a hub for journalism, making Fleet Street a famous avenue of newspapers printing day and night. It also became a space for fashion and youth culture, with areas like Camden and Shoreditch attracting students who propel the latest trends. Canary Wharf, a new hub for business and finance, began to near the end of the last century, and is now a highly modern skyscraper district where major companies have established their headquarters and thousands of hopeful young professionals come to begin their careers.

In 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, and London became the centre of tense negotiations and tumultuous politics not for the first time in its history. Street protests are a common occurrence, usually around the area outside of the Prime Minister's official residence and office, and residence, number 10, Downing Street. Recent years have seen movements such as Free Palestine and Black Lives Matter activists flooding the streets with chants and slogans.

In 2020, London was shut down by the COVID-19 pandemic like most of the world and became a much quieter city for two years whilst many of its residents moved to other parts of the country to work from home. During this time, barely any tourists were seen exploring the streets, and London fell quiet.

Now, the city has fully re-opened and continues to regenerate itself without losing the incredible history it has to offer. It is a city full of some of the most stunning sights there are to see in the world, with endless historical sites to discover and surprises around every corner.

# COVENT GARDEN

  
Embankment Station  
11 minutes' walk



## COVENT GARDEN MARKET

*Home to Covent Garden Market, the Royal Opera House and The London Transport Museum, Covent Garden mixes history, high class culture and retail therapy. A short walk from Embankment, this area offers trendy lunch options, unique boutique shops and a refined atmosphere.*



## THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The present theatre was built in 1858. During World War II it was used as a dance hall. After the Government began funding the arts, the Royal Opera House was established as the home of the opera and ballet companies now known as The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet. It was the ballet company which reopened the building on 20 February 1946 with *The Sleeping Beauty*.

*You can pop in for a photo of its gorgeous mezzanine and have a refreshment in the cafeteria. There is also a fantastic gift shop.*

This fascinating collection from the Transport for London archives, including old trains, buses, equipment and advertisements. It includes over 500,000 objects including those that powered the world's first underground railway here in London.

You can enter the fabulous gift shop for free with a fantastic selection of unique London Underground-themed merchandise, including (surprisingly) stylish clothing and homeware.

***The Museum takes 1-2 hours to go around and costs £24.50 (Annual Pass, which is required for one visit, as well as a free timed entry ticket).***



## SEVEN DIALS

A short walk north of Covent Garden market will take you to Seven Dials, a quirky spot where seven streets converge at this strange-looking sundial monument in the middle. It was designed by Thomas Neale in the 1690s and given a major facelift in 1974 after falling to dereliction. Neale's original plan was to have six streets meeting in the middle, hence the tower only having six dial faces. This spot is a great hub for independent shops, as well as a top notch photo spot. Nearby, you will find Seven Dials Market which houses some great lunch spots and a bookshop.

***Relaxed area for wandering, browsing, snacking and taking photos.***

# COVENT GARDEN

TOP 10

*Shops, restaurants and cafes*



# SOUTH BANK



Embankment Station  
10 minutes' walk



## TATE MODERN

*The walk down the South Bank, the part of the river Thames opposite Embankment and Big Ben, is an exciting look at some of London's world-famous creative hubs. The Tate Modern, a modern art museum, stands proud in the old OXO factory, alongside institutions such as the National Theatre. There's even a book market and underground skate park.*



## THE LONDON EYE

The London Eye is the tallest wheel of its kind in Europe and the most visited paid tourist attraction in the UK, with over 3 million annual visitors. From one of its 32 capsules, you can slowly rise above the cityscape and see for miles over London's skyline, mixing historic and modern architecture as far as the eye can see. The Eye was originally constructed to celebrate the millennium, the year 2000, and took 7 years to construct.

*You may need to book in advance to go up the wheel as it is very busy.*

The Tate Modern is one of the most iconic museums in the world, welcoming 5.7 million visitors per year. The Tate group holds the UK's collection of modern art, from 1900s onwards. The exhibitions are unique and unpredictable, many touching on contemporary issues, ideas and politics. If you want to experience some truly world class artworks that are sure to challenge your perspectives and prompt creative thinking, this is the place to go.

*The Museum is free to visit and you can spend as little or as much time as you wish. There's also a good gift shop and upstairs cafe with a view of the Thames.*



## TATE MODERN



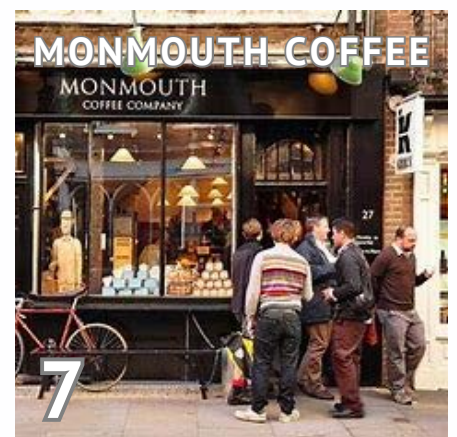
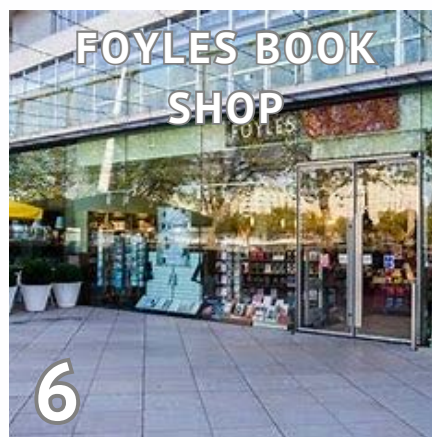
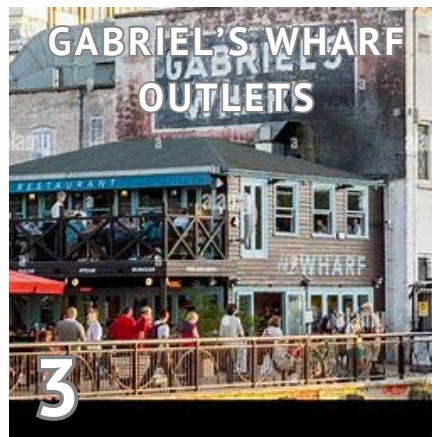
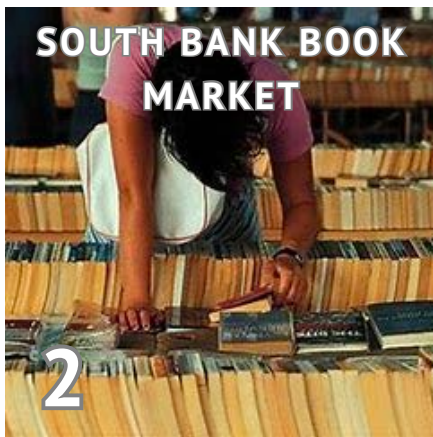
## THE GLOBE

Shakespeare's Globe is a reconstruction of the original playhouse, first constructed in 1599, which was subsequently destroyed by a fire, rebuilt and then demolished in 1644. This one was completed in 1999 and reflects the original structure faithfully. Naturally, the theatre has a packed programme of Shakespeare, including modernisations and experimental adaptations for the modern age.

*If you're not keen on devoting 3 hours to watching a show, the Globe offers frequent tours as well as a great gift shop.*

# SOUTH BANK

TOP 10 *Shops, restaurants and cafes*



# WESTMINSTER & PICCADILLY



Embankment Station  
9 minutes' walk



*When it comes to famous sights in London, this is the place to go. The Westminster area is the seat of the British Government, including the Houses of Parliament where decisions are made, the Prime Minister's house just behind it at No. 10 Downing Street, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the Ministry of Defence, and even Buckingham Palace is just a short walk away. Westminster is the heart of London, and its surrounding side streets contain an impressive number of artisan cafes and independent shops, sometimes even older than the Parliament itself!*



The official royal residence: Buckingham Palace is an impressive structure with centuries of history. It was originally built in 1705, though not initially as a royal residence. It was bought by George III in 1762 for his wife, Queen Charlotte, and became known as 'The Queen's House'. The Palace and surrounding gardens, especially the famous pelicans at St. James' Park, are well worth a visit.

*You may be able to book in advance for a tour, but slots are limited and seasonal. The King's Gallery, however, is always open and worth a visit.*

The Prime Minister officially lives in this unassuming townhouse tucked away in the middle of King Charles Street. This building has become a famous background to many historic interviews and national events. There is often a crowd gathered outside the gates hoping to catch a glance of some political action that often occurs just metres away. Who knows, if you stop by, you might see someone you recognise!

*You cannot visit 10 Downing Street, but it is worth peering in from the outside to see the iconic big black door, and perhaps bump into Larry, the Downing Street cat who is often sunbathing outside.*

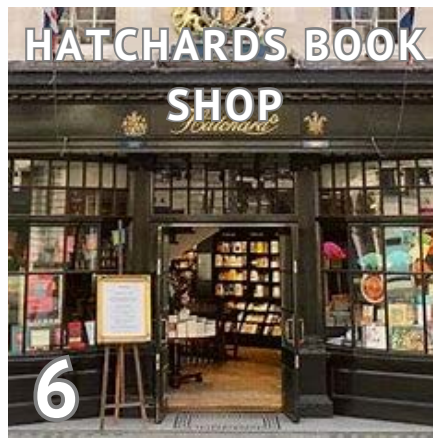


One of London's most well-known facts is that 'Big Ben' is the name of the clock, not the tower. The tower was renamed in 2012 'Elizabeth Tower' after the late Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. It is likely the most photographed building in London. The Palace of Westminster, Houses of Parliament, was destroyed by fire in 1834. The plans for the new building in 1844 decided it should include a large clocktower, and bells first rang out on 31st May 1859. They can still be heard for a long distance around central London today.

*Tours may be available with advance booking.*

# WESTMINSTER & PICCADILLY

## TOP 10 *Shops, restaurants and cafes*



# REGENT & OXFORD STREETS



Embankment Station  
16 minutes' walk



## REGENT STREET

*There are few shopping destinations more glamorous than the flagship Regent Street. Here, you will find the world's most popular brands presented at their best, including the Apple store, Zara, H&M, H&M Home, Hamley's toy store, Cos, Mango and many more. Just behind is Carnaby Street, where you will find more unique brands like Brandy Melville and great eateries in Instagrammable Kingly Court. Parallel to Regent Street is Oxford Street (which really was the way towards Oxford in the past!). Anything you couldn't find yet will be here. There is also the impressive BBC News centre at the top. If you're lucky, you might spot a famous face turning up to work!*



## PICCADILLY CIRCUS

Piccadilly Circus is the meeting point of all of the central thoroughfares in London, including Piccadilly, King Charles Street (Houses of Parliament), Shaftesbury Avenue ("Theatre Land") and Coventry Street. towards Leicester Square and Covent Garden. In the centre stands a famous statue commonly called "Eros", but was actually erected in 1892–93 to commemorate the Anthony Ashley Cooper and his achievement in replacing child labour with school education. The advertising screens were replaced a few years ago by one massive wraparound screen and constantly features popular brands.

Constructed like a big old dark wood ship, Liberty department store, dubbed by Oscar Wilde as the 'chosen resort of the artistic shopper' is a mainstay of Regent Street. Famous for its patterned silk scarves and rich fabrics, this unusually styled building is fascinating as much from a retail perspective as architectural. It was established in 1875 and became famous for its colourful silk neck scarves, which are still popular luxury goods today. It's worth taking a visit to its fabrics and rugs showrooms, showcasing the best of its maximalist yet elegant designs.



## LIBERTY OF LONDON



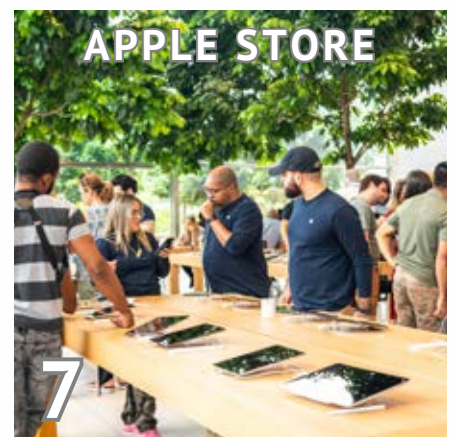
## BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE

At the top of Regent Street stands the recognisable BBC Broadcasting House., opened in 1932 and containing 22 sound insulated radio studios and a concert hall which is still in use today. In World War Two, it was even hit by a bomb which killed 7 people. Under the archway you can see a statue of George Orwell, with a quote that reads, 'if liberty means nothing at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear'.

*You won't be able to enter the building, but next door is another famous site: the Langham Hotel. It was in a room here that the original Suffragists, pioneers of the women's vote in the UK, held their first meeting.*

# REGENT & OXFORD STREETS

TOP 10 *Shops, restaurants and cafes*



# TOWER BRIDGE

## HISTORY WALK



Embankment Station  
51 minutes' scenic walk



## TOWER BRIDGE

*Tower Bridge is at the centre of old London, where historic sites merge with the backdrop of hyper modern Canary Wharf. The bridge is a stunning structure and not to be missed. Around, you can find incredible sites like the Tower of London and the original London Wall is not too far. It may be a long walk, but you're sure to see a lot on the way. On South Bank, the side with the London Eye, you'll catch lots of London's modern art scene. On the Embankment side, you'll pass brilliant views and unexpected chunks of history like Cleopatra's Needle, damaged by WWII shells. Finish your journey with snacks at Borough Market. To get great views, head up The Shard or to the Sky Garden.*



## TOWER OF LONDON

You'll be hard pressed to find anything as old and important in the city as the Tower. Established by William the Conqueror over 1,000 years ago, it has acted as a palace, a prison, an armoury, a site of leadership, torture and execution. Incredibly, it still stands in the middle of the city. It is guarded still by 'beefeaters', special guards in red uniform, and five live-in ravens. Importantly, it now houses the crown jewels, the ceremonial pieces worn by the king or queen during momentous occasions like coronations.

*If you want to give this one a proper visit, you need to set aside an hour or so to look around. It's a big place with a lot to see!*

Borough Market is one of the city's most beloved spots. Like the Tower, its history goes back over 1,000 years as a destination for fresh produce like fish, meat, fruit and vegetables. Strangely, the Parliament shut it down briefly in 1775, but just two years later, local residents re-established the market and it continued as if nothing had happened. Nowadays, it's a busy place with plenty of stalls catering to a wide range of tastes, including fresh raclette and potatoes, Spanish tapas, British fish and chips, various cake stalls and the ever popular Humble Crumble, serving decadent luxury crumble bowls.



## BOROUGH MARKET



## CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE

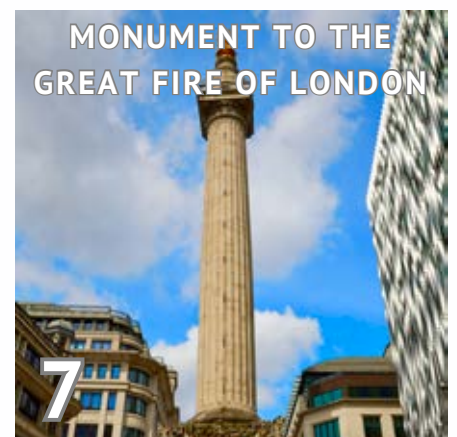
Cleopatra's Needle is an almost 3,500-year-old granite obelisk. It was made in Egypt and given to Britain as a gift. Obelisks are tall, tapered, four-sided monuments which were built in pairs for the entrances of ancient temples. This one in Westminster was carved with dedications to different gods along with symbols representing the pharaoh Thutmose III.

It was originally made in around 1500 BCE in Heliopolis, modern-day Cairo. After a long, treacherous journey at sea, the obelisk was finally erected in Westminster on 12 September 1878. Its pair is in Central Park in New York City.

# TOWER BRIDGE

TOP 10

*Eateries and historic sights*



# WET WEATHER HACKS

## Making the most of rainy London days



Did you know it rains, on average, 109.4 days a year in London? During Oxford Royale programmes, it's 95% of the time! Well, maybe that's not exactly true... but it can sometimes feel like it!

Fortunately, there's lots of ways to escape the elements. We Londoners are used to rain and rarely let it stop us.

**We have several words for rain in the UK:**  
**A 'dreich' day in Scotland is wet, grey and generally miserable.**

**In England, you'll often hear people use the phrase, 'it's peeing it down', and more crude variations.**  
**In London, there's a dialect called Cockney which often uses rhymes with other words. For example, one for rain is commonly 'Duke of Spain'**

### #1: Dance in the rain



If we're being honest here, the true British way is to grab an umbrella and some waterproofs and get on with it! If you're from a country where rain is uncommon, you might be wary about going out, but it's largely harmless. You may get damp and be slightly less comfortable, but it doesn't need to stop you. If you aren't prepared with an umbrella, ask your Campus Team to borrow a big sturdy Oxford Royale umbrella which is sure to keep you dry.

### #2: Lock in at one of London's free museums

One thing we're exceptionally proud of in London is that our best sights are free to visit. London's museums and art galleries are large, varied and always come equipped with quality cafes and gift shops. If you don't fancy venturing out, try setting aside a couple of hours at one of these:

- the British Museum (fantastic photo op. of the ceiling, incredible artefacts from around the world)
- The National Gallery and Portrait Gallery (easy walk from Embankment Station. Famous pieces such as Van Gogh's 'The Sunflowers')
- Tate Modern (thought-provoking modern art in a converted factory building)



### #3: Shop undercover at a market



A few of London's markets are well-covered, like Covent Garden and Borough Market. There may not be enough to entertain for several hours, but it might help you to avoid the worst of a bad downpour in comfort. You can easily dart from shop to shop in the surrounding area too, especially around Covent Garden. The shops on Regent and Oxford Street are also close by and likely wouldn't require you to spend too much time walking outside.

### #4: Park up and study or read

Sometimes we just need to cut our losses and make the most of our time even if our plans fall apart. There's some lovely cafes around the centre of the city to sit down with your laptop or book for a while. At least then you can finish up some homework and assignment prep to free up time on sunnier days during the rest of your programme. Some recommended spots are:

- Foyle's bookshop cafe on Tottenham Court Road
- Costa at Waterstones bookshop, Trafalgar Square
- Fair Shot cafe in Covent Garden



# HELP! I'M LOST!

Advice for any  
tricky situation

## DANGEROUS EMERGENCIES

If someone is very ill, injured and/or extremely distressed, contact the emergency services. You will need to let the operator know which service you need - fire, police or ambulance - your current location and the person's age if you are calling about someone else.

National emergency  
phone number

999

## MILD-MODERATE EMERGENCIES

If you are lost, late for an Oxford Royale event, missing a belonging etc. you can call the Oxford Royale emergency line and be put through to your Campus Team Office. Do not call this number for dangerous emergencies.

The Oxford Royale emergency  
phone number can be found on your  
student badge

## IF YOUR PHONE ISN'T AN OPTION

If you find yourself in a situation where your phone isn't available and you're not sure how to get home, you may need to ask someone for help. Go into a shop or public building and ask to borrow a phone, then call the Oxford Royale emergency number. It is safer to go inside somewhere rather than ask a stranger on the street.

If you are really stuck, you can find our Imperial College campus team by asking for directions to the V&A museum, Natural History Museum or History of Science Museum. London also has lots of public maps to check, but do not rely on the Underground map for anything other than finding stations: it's not geographically accurate!

**Imperial College London**  
**Exhibition Road**  
**Knightsbridge**  
**SW7 2AZ**

Stations nearby: High Street Kensington,  
Gloucester Road, South Kensington,  
Knightsbridge

Oxford Royale  
Emergencies

Friend 1

Friend 2

Friend 3

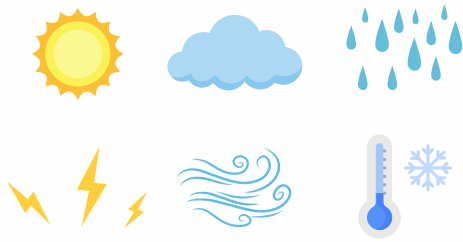
UK Emergency  
Number

It's always wise to have both a paper and digital copy of your campus address/meeting point and contact information, just in case your phone is unusable.

# JOURNAL

Use this page to reflect on your time in London.

## WEATHER TODAY



## FEELS



## WHO I WAS WITH

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1. What was your favourite memory from today?

2. Is there anything you missed in London that you want to see next time?

3. Who made your day better today? Was it friends, strangers, your Campus Team?

4. Did you learn something new? Whether it was about the city, your new friends or even yourself?



## London Guide