

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Housing</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Other Necessities</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Dining</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Shopping</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Entertainment</u>	<u>12</u>

Congratulations! You've gotten a great public interest internship. You're ready for the challenges and rewards of your job, but are you ready to move to, navigate, and enjoy a new city on a modest salary?

It can be difficult to live cheaply in some of the world's most expensive (and exciting) cities, so OPIA and the 1L Public Interest Section Representatives have put together a guide to give you a few tips on how to get by (and have fun) on a public interest salary. We'll tell you how to find safe, inexpensive housing, get around in the city, eat out or in, hang out, and explore the city's cultural offerings.

In compiling these guides, we relied on numerous sources: our own experiences, law school career service offices, newspapers, the Internet, and especially Harvard Law School students. The information in *Cheap Living* is meant to be helpful, not authoritative. No doubt, we have missed some stellar bargains. By listing a feature in the guide, we do not mean to endorse it, other than to say that a student like you has mentioned it as a great deal. *Cheap Living* remains a work in progress.

A very special thanks to all of the 1L Section Reps who researched and wrote this *Cheap Living Guides*. Even in the midst of exams, the Auction, Ames, and everything else that consumes 1L year, they made time to make sure that their classmates get the most out of their public interest summer internship experience. Have a wonderful summer!

- Kirsten Bermingham, OPIA Assistant Director for Administration

**The London Guide was updated by 1L section representatives Ladun Omideyi, Meghan Ingrisano, and Jessica Levin in 2011. Charity Fort and Elizabeth Nebrling updated the Guide in 2013*

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Housing**

Congratulations! You scored a public interest job working in London. Your summer will undoubtedly be amazing, but unfortunately also very expensive. The following website gives a helpful overview of what you should expect things to cost while living in London:

www.workgateways.com/working-cost-of-living.html. This guide will provide you with some basic tools and advice on how to live in and enjoy London on a budget.

The Basics

Housing

Where in London should I live?

You thought living in Cambridge was expensive, wait 'til you get to London! While London housing can be pretty pricey, there are many ways to try to minimize the amount of money you spend on weekly or monthly rent. One way is by being open to a number of different locations. The city of London is broken down in a number of ways. The main and most helpful way is by “zones.” There are six different approximately concentric zones within Greater London, which correspond to the distance from London’s center. These zones are factored into the pricing schemes of most of London’s transportation and the cost of a tube or train ride will vary depending on how many zones you pass through.

London Tube Map



Full-size map available at: www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/standard-tube-map.pdf.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Housing**

While London is a comparatively safe city, a number of areas south of the river (basically SW and SE, although some SW postal codes are north of the Thames) may have a few areas that are less safe places to live, particularly for people unfamiliar with the city. Before you settle on a particular location, you should ideally find out as much information as possible. A website by the University of London (<http://www.housing.london.ac.uk/cms/>; click on ‘area guide’ in the bottom right corner) has information that may be very helpful in your housing search, including student opinions about different areas of the city. If you can locate where you will be working, using the tube map, postal code map, and the University of London website above, you will have all the tools you need to begin your summer housing search.

Where do I start looking?

Now that you have some sense of where you may want to live, there are a lot of different housing options available. One option is dormitory housing. There are a lot of colleges in London, and many of them have summer housing available for visiting students. Some of these dormitories may even include some meals within the price of accommodations. Again, the University of London housing website (www.studenthousing.lon.ac.uk/home.html?no_cache=1) is a good resource, and includes a list of resident halls at the various colleges that are open for the summer to students. The list is reproduced below, but the UL website also includes links to housing at each of these schools. Another resource is the “Summer Breaks” management service (www.summerbreaks.org/). However, be aware that their properties are generally available beginning in mid-June. That being said, it is worth calling or emailing certain residences, as there are sometimes openings earlier. This can also be a problem in some of the halls of residence listed below.

University of London Halls

Mostly based in WC1 postcode; single room prices from £29 per night for bed and breakfast.

Shaftesbury Student Housing

En-suite rooms in Central London from £27.50 per night for stays of 4 weeks or more.

UCL Halls of Residence

Prices start from £29.50 per night for single rooms. Availability is typically mid-June to mid-September.

Listings site for Halls of Residence across London

Contact details for several Halls of Residence that do not have their own website can be found here: www.studenthousing.lon.ac.uk/short-stay/halls-of-residence.html.

LSE Halls of Residence

Prices from £33 per night for single rooms.

Cass and Claredale

Halls based in East London. Single rooms at Sir John Cass Hall are £18 per person per night or £14 for eight or more nights and Claredale house is £77-93 per person per week.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Housing**

Sundial Court

City of London center; historical building close to St. Paul's Cathedral and Tower of London for £31 or £35 per person. Rooms available for the summer.

Goldsmiths College Halls

In South East London, self-catered stays of twenty-eight nights or more from £122.60 per night for non students, student rates are from £14.30 per night. En-suite serviced rooms (which include bed linen, towels, daily cleaning etc) available with no minimum stay restriction are also available.

Kings College Halls

Large provider of housing. Bed and breakfast singles from £23 per night for students.

Imperial College

Rooms in South Kensington from £41 per night.

University of Westminster Halls

Independent travelers rates start from £21.00 per night, and group rates are even cheaper (depending on numbers in the party and length of stay). They also offer discounted rates to interns, students on University of Westminster courses and alumni.

University of Arts London

Halls available over the summer for short stays, some halls in central London. Competitive rates, most halls offer single rooms en-suite. Rates start from £20 a day and include bedding.

Goodenough College

Goodenough College provides residential accommodation for postgraduate students from all over the world. It is centrally located and has a strong community. The college is by application for the school year, but is worth checking to see if they have summer openings:

www.goodenough.ac.uk.

House/Flat-Share

Another option for housing is the house-share or flat-share. You can often find students or other young (and not so young) people looking for temporary roommates for their apartments or houses. This is a great—albeit more risky—option. Depending on the house or apartment and the number of roommates, it may be less expensive than living in a single accommodation (even a dorm). It will also provide more amenities than living in a dorm, such as a full kitchen, a bathroom that doesn't require shower shoes or waiting in line behind an entire floor, and common areas that often have TVs. It can be risky because you can't gauge the cleanliness of your roommates ahead of time, and you will probably not have anything more than a few emails to get a sense of whether or not you will get along. However, if it does work out, it probably makes for a slightly more comfortable stay (unless you are already used to dorm living). Also, if your roommates are nice, they will probably make an effort to take you out or at least talk to you once in a while, so you have the potential for instant-friends when you arrive.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Transportation**

If you are interested in shared accommodations or even subletting an entire apartment, Gumtree (www.gumtree.co.uk) is the Craigslist-equivalent for London and should have a lot of postings. Craigslist also exists for London (www.london.craigslist.co.uk), and is another good place to search, but is just less popular than Gumtree. The University of London website also has listings by students for shared housing available at: www.housing.lon.ac.uk/scnew/scl_home.php. The website requires a login and password, but any student can register and you should receive the login information in a few days. Accommodation for Students (www.accommodationforstudents.com/London.asp) is another website that you can use to search for shared housing or to find flats for rent.

Transportation

Just getting from the airport to your new temporary home in London presents a rude awakening as to just how expensive living in London can be. A cab from Heathrow to central London can easily run you £60 or more (that's almost \$100!). So, when you arrive, arrive prepared. You can easily get to your apartment, wherever it is located, via the tube. However, since you have no idea where you are, and you are lugging at least two months worth of underwear around that this point, navigating your way to your new place on public transportation may not be feasible. A happy medium may be reserving a **shuttle or airport transfer** prior to your arrival. Heathrowshuttle.com quotes shuttle services from about £25 depending on your destination in central London. You may be able to locate even better deals by doing further research online. The shuttle is significantly less than the taxi, and at least you don't have to worry about being lost on the streets of London with your unmentionables. That said, if you come with a reasonably light load of luggage, it is not uncommon to see folks making their way through London with lots of bags. You can also easily secure a cheaper taxi for a few pounds from the nearest tube stop to your home. Before deciding to rely on public transportation, be sure that your arrival will be during the normal operating hours. The tube generally begins running around 5:30 a.m. and stops service between 12 and 1 a.m. You can find the hours for your specific route by viewing timetables at: www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/1129.aspx.

Public transportation is generally very good in London; however certain areas are less-serviced, particularly south of the Thames. If you stick to the more central areas, you will find the public transportation here is your best friend—and the **Oyster Card** is your friendship bracelet. Much like the Charlie Card here in Boston, the Oyster Card is a reusable card you can swipe to gain access to both the bus and the tube, and will give you a significant discount over using the paper cards. Unlike the Charlie Card, the Oyster card gives a number of other advantages besides small discounts, most notable by “maxing out” so that you never spend more than £7.40 on a given day (if traveling in Zones One and Two, which covers most of central London and areas of interest). When you take the tube you swipe when you both enter and exit, so the cost of your trip will depend on how many zones you've traveled. It costs £3.00 for an Oyster Card, but the savings are definitely worth it. For instance, for a tube-ride within zone 1, a single fare ticket is £4.00, but the same trip using the Oyster Card costs only £1.90. Bus rides are £2.00 single fare and £1.30 using the Oyster Card. That is a huge difference on a daily basis, so you can save a lot of money on local travel, not to mention the added convenience of the card over purchasing

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Transportation**

single-fare tickets. You can pay to use your Oyster as a weekly, monthly or longer Travelcard to cover the zones you need, or just “top up” the card with cash or your credit card. You can also go online to the London underground site and set up “Auto Top-Up” service from your credit or debit card, where your oyster card will automatically be added to whenever your balance falls below £8.00. General fare information for the tube (both with and without Oyster card) is available at: www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/Fares-and-ticketing-supplementary-info-07-07.pdf or <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>. There are also discounts available as an Oyster Card holder (www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14836.aspx). You can pick up an Oyster Card by filling out a short form and forking over a £3.00 refundable deposit at most Tube Stations or various Oyster Ticket Stops across London.

If you are connected with a University and plan on getting a bus or tube pass, you may want to look into getting a Student Oyster Card for additional savings at: www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/14312.aspx.

In addition to the regular underground and bus system, London also has a night bus system which takes over when the tube and regular busses stop running, which is around midnight. This is a great alternative to expensive cabs for getting around at night. Night bus service is limited, so you should definitely check the routes before you head out, so that you don't get caught waiting at an empty bus stop in the middle of the night. Maps for night bus service by borough are available at: www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/maps/buses/night-buses.aspx.

While there are many ways to get around London, if you don't know where you are going, none of them are very helpful. The Transport for London website is very helpful for trip planning as long as you know the closest tube or bus stop to where you are going. See www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2605.aspx for help with trip planning. Another trip planning website is www.mylondonmap.com, but there are plenty of other sites, including maps.google.com which can be a big help in figuring out where you need to go. Another really interesting (and incredibly useful) website is Street Sensation, at www.streetsensation.co.uk/. This site has pictures of some of the most-popular areas of London, including Oxford Street, Upper Street, Covent Garden, and Leicester Square, all at street level, letting you get a sense of exactly what stores or restaurants are in the area before you head down there. This could be incredibly helpful if you are looking for a particular place but unsure of the exact location.

For the student on the go, **London A-Z** (<http://www.amazon.com/London-Street-Atlas-A-Z-S/dp/1843486024>) is a must have book. It is a small paperback (possibly spiral bound) book that is like a pocket “Thomas Guide” to London (for those of you who know what a Thomas Guide is). Unlike the streets of Boston, London streets are generally well-labeled, so you can pull it out anytime you feel a bit lost to get your bearings and find wherever it is you need to go. This is something that you should have in-hand when you arrive in London, but if you don't you can always pick one up in any bookstore, stationary store, or any of the ubiquitous souvenir shops throughout Central London. It would be a good idea to purchase this book, and perhaps a few other travel guides prior to your departure to London. As a way to get acclimated to the city once you arrive, you should definitely consider hopping on a bus near your home, taking a seat on the top level with your A-Z guide in your lap, and getting a lay of the land by taking note of useful stores, street names, and tube stations that you pass along the way.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Transportation**

London is also an extremely walkable city and the best way to really get a feel for it, weather permitting, is to explore it by foot. People are generally very friendly and helpful with directions, so don't be afraid to get a bit lost—who knows what you might discover!

Be sure to take advantage of London's central location and the ease of traveling within the UK and to other nearby countries. There are great deals on bus and train travel to places like Oxford, Bath, Cambridge, Windsor Castle, Brighton, Canterbury, Stonehenge, Stratford-upon-Avon, Winchester, and Wimbledon. Many of these make great day trips and you could certainly fill much of your free time with plenty of travel without even leaving the country. If you prefer a more structured travel and guided experience, you may want to look into the variety of day trip options available on websites like www.viator.com, www.globetrips.com/, and www.haggisadventures.com/. These trips usually include transportation and tours, and often entrance into main sites of interest, so they can be a great deal.

One of the great things about summering in London is that the rest of Europe is only a train or discount plane ride away! **Ryan Air**, **easyJet**, and **Vueling** are some of the discount airlines that offer super low fares for flights to pretty much all popular European destinations. You can get flights from London to places like Rome, Barcelona, St. Tropez, and Oslo for only £10 (plus fees). While these are great deals, be aware that some of the airports are on the out-lying area of the cities they serve, so you may have to pay a non-trivial amount to get from the airport to your final destination. Also, the airline tends to make a lot of its money on fees for baggage that exceeds the free baggage allowance—so make sure you pack light, don't buy too many souvenirs, and check the website for the details on the luggage allowance before you show up at the airport.

Another site for discounted European travel is Lastminute.com. Both the US and UK versions end in .com, so make sure when you first visit the website you select the UK version (or if not, change the settings to access the UK version of the site). You can use this site to book flights, hotels, package trips, and tours/activities in your destination location as well as within London. As always, its best to shop around, but this is a good place to start, and possibly pick up some great deals.

Additionally, the train, or Eurostar, which travels to places like Paris and Brussels, is very comfortable and relatively fast and may be less expensive than air travel. It is also a great way to see a bit of European countryside and has the added ease of leaving from and arriving in the middle of the city (versus having to travel outside the city to the airport—an additional time and expense).

Other Necessities

Cell Phones

When many of you travel to London, you may be coming with a cell phone that has the appropriate bandwidth for the area. This generally means a quad-band phone. However, even if you find you will get coverage in Europe, you should definitely contact your cell phone provider to find out what the rates are for both outgoing *and* incoming calls so that you don't have any

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Other Necessities**

nasty surprises on your bill when you come back stateside. It would be a good idea to find these rates somewhere on your provider's website, because customer service has been known to give out incorrect information, and showing that you were provided incorrect information would be nearly impossible to prove if you end up needing to contest your charges. Take advice from your first-year Contracts professor and get it in writing! Europe also has many pay-as-you-go service providers and you may be able to find a pretty cheap phone, and combine it with a provider that allows very reasonable rates locally and/or internationally.

There are many independent cell phone stores in London, and at these stores you can purchase an unlocked cell phone, which will allow you to use a SIM card purchased from any provider. The SIM card is the card inserted into your cell phone that determines which provider's service you are using, and therefore the charges you incur when you make calls, texts, etc. When you purchase a cell phone from most U.S. providers, it is locked and can only be used by a particular company and is the only brand that your phone will accept. If you buy an unlocked phone, you can use a SIM card from any provider, and it allows you shop around for whichever provider offers the best rates for the type of service you need.

There are many locations where you can purchase **unlocked cell phones and SIM cards**. One popular store is the **Car-phone Warehouse**. These are throughout London, but there is a particularly large store on **Oxford Street** (see shopping), and there are other similar cell phone stores located on the same street. Depending on whether you will be calling more frequently to the U.S. or locally within London, you can probably find a SIM card that will provide a pretty good rate. For instance, a recent London traveler a SIM card that allowed me to make calls to the U.S. for 5p (approx. 10 cents) per minute, but local calls were 7p (14 cents) per minute. These rates are great, if most of your calls will be to the States. you find you will be calling mostly locally (for instance as part of your job, or just to keep track of all the new friends you will be making in London), you should be able to find an even better local rate. Electronics stores or **supermarkets** also sell cell phones and pay-as-you-go plans, but they may not be the lowest rates or cheapest phones. Before you buy, you should definitely take a moment to shop around, and Oxford Street or the new Westfield shopping mall in Shepherd's Bush, would be your best one-stop-shopping areas for cell phone stores.

If you want the ease of calling internationally without the expense and don't plan on making a lot of long cell phone calls within London, where there's a strong texting culture, 3 pay-as-you-go is probably the best option, where 3 is the carrier, and pay as you go is the alternative to a fixed monthly-rate plan. With 3 pay as you go you get unlimited internet and texts for every £15 top-up. 3 also has Skype-enabled cell phones for as little as £30. Skype, an internet phone service, allows you to call US cell phones for as little as 2.3 cents a minute or \$2.99 per month, and using your 3 data will not cost you any additional money. This is a great option for keeping in touch. Additionally, Skype-enabled phones allow you to check your email, facebook and browse the web. For more information on calling from your computer using, or to set up an account, see the Skype website: www.skype.com/en/.

Travel Guides

In addition to this handy Cheap Living Guide, you may want to purchase another more in-depth travel book to help you get the most out of your time in London. After a quick stop at the Coop, or browsing the options at Amazon.com, you will see that there are a lot of options to choose from. You can find a lot of specific books, e.g. Top Ten guides, Best Day Trips, Walking Guides, etc. These are great if you know there is a particular way you want to approach your time in the city. If you are looking for a good all-around guide to London and don't already have a favorite brand, **Let's Go London** is a great book for young, and particularly budget travelers. It provides plenty of helpful pointers for navigating the city, finding discounts, and avoiding rip-offs. **Lonely Planet** is also a solid choice for budget traveling. They have London options, UK options or European options. Even before you arrive you may want to check out these books and see whatever additional tips it may have for basics like housing and getting from the airport.

International Student ID Cards

There are many ways that the truly frugal traveler can save some cash through an unabashed willingness to flash her student ID card. Unfortunately, if your student ID is not from a London University, it probably won't be accepted. This is probably one of the few times that the Harvard name won't count for anything at all! If you would like to benefit from student discounts that require showing an ID, you will need to purchase an **International Student ID Card**. These are available through **STA Travel** for \$25. Fortunately, there is an STA office hidden in Harvard Square, located at 65 Mt. Auburn Street. (The STA office is also a convenient place to pick up **electronic converters** before you go abroad, although you can probably get them cheaper on Amazon. Remember, US to UK converters will be hard to find once you arrive in London.) There are some ISIC-specific discounts, and you can check these out at www.isic.org/student-discounts/discounts-worldwide.html. STA Travel also has access to discounted airline tickets. If you don't get your ISIC card before leaving, there are a number of STA Travel offices in London you can stop by to purchase a card once you arrive.

Dining

In addition to sleeping with a roof over your head, eating is another potentially costly activity in London. Fortunately, there are a lot of ways to stretch a pound and still eat pretty well. As you walk the streets of London, you will notice that most restaurants and pubs have sandwich boards out in front of their establishments listing special deals or prix fixe meals (sometimes at special hours). These usually represent pretty good bargains and provide a great opportunity to eat cheaply at a variety of restaurants. If you really keep an eye out, you may be able to find tremendous meal specials, and even be able to find dinner, including wine for under £10—you just have to keep your eyes open. Two good websites to check out are www.london-eating.co.uk/, a MenuPages type site self-declared "the definitive guide to eating in London," and www.toptable.co.uk, where restaurants from all price ranges advertise good deals if you book in advance. Also, pubs, even if they don't advertise on the outside, are often good places to

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Dining**

grab a filling meal for a low price—and maybe a pint of something else to go with it. Make sure to ask friends in the area which local pubs serve decent food, because not all do! Wetherspoon is a popular pub chain that frequently has food specials and drinks that are cheap by London standards (www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk). Gastro-pubs that serve exceptional food are also becoming more popular throughout London.

There are lots of great restaurants scattered throughout the city, but one good place to try if you don't know what you are in the mood for is **Upper Street**. If you take the tube or bus to Angel and head North towards Upper Street you will start seeing restaurant after restaurant (with a few pubs thrown in). Some of these are more pricey than others, but there are some good deals to be had if you take a leisurely stroll down the street, and keep your eye out for an interesting-sounding (or smelling) meal at the right price. One restaurant chain that you will find near here is **Nando's**, a very popular Portuguese-themed chicken restaurant, famous for their peri-peri chicken. In the past they have had punch cards, so that if you frequent the store often you can get a free ¼ chicken. The deals may have changed, but it is definitely worth checking out along with all the other potential deals on Upper Street.

Other tasty and economical chains are **Pizza Express**, more elegant than the name implies, with individual pies and fresh salads (www.pizzaexpress.com) and **Ask**, with a large selection of Italian favorites (www.askrestaurants.com). London is also famous for great Indian food, which locals call “curry”. If you're in the mood for a London pub experience, a few favorites are **The Hen and Chicken Theatre Bar** (www.thehenandchickenstheatrebar.co.uk) where you can drink a pint and see a stand-up comedy act or theater show, and **The Old Queen's Head** (www.theoldqueenshead.com), a pub with a fun atmosphere and great live music. If you're looking to step outside of UK Pub food, check out Cuba Libre and Bar Havana for some authentic Cuban food (www.cubalibreondon.co.uk) or any of the Gallipoli restaurants (there are three on Upper Street, each with a slightly different vibe) for some authentic Turkish food (www.cafegallipoli.com). If you take a turn on Essex Road, instead of following Upper Street, and wander down the back roads you will find great brunch places and small boutiques and bookshops. Alternatively, take the tube to Aldgate East and stroll down **Brick Lane**, which features scores of curry houses as well as several night clubs.

Covent Garden is another good place to go for a variety of restaurants—in addition to the shopping and people—watching for which the area is also popular. This is not necessarily the best place for bargain eats, but there are a wide range of restaurants and the entertainment-value for the area is quite good. This is definitely a place to go with your new British friends—or even your HLS friends who come visit you in London to mooch off your good fortune at landing this amazing summer job.

While there are some good central locations for finding food in London, there are also a number of hidden jewels scattered throughout. If you like crepes, **La Creperie de Hampstead** is a place you can't miss. The address is 77 Hampstead High Street, but this popular spot is really just a cart near the Hampstead tube stop. Exit the Hampstead station and look for the long line of hungry patrons—you'll find the La Creperie at the end. The ham, cheese, and egg crepe is a very popular (and yummy) savory crepe. As it's a completely take away operation, you have to be prepared to walk and eat—so come with empty hands and leave with a full tummy.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Dining**

Another place not to miss is **Hare and Tortoise**, an Asian-themed restaurant with great noodle and rice dishes. The portions are also quite big and prices quite low, so for the budget traveler this is a highly recommended restaurant. There are a few locations in London as it recently expanded and updated its menu, but the original location is in Brunswick Centre near Russell Square in WC1. You can also check out the website for the other locations (www.hareandtortoise-restaurants.co.uk/).

If the only thing you like better than Thai food is finding great Thai food in unexpected places, then **Churchill Arms Pub** is the place for you. This very traditional London pub is located in **Notting Hill** at 119 Kensington Church Street, London, W8. It has some great drinks, but the best (and most surprising!) part is the fantastic Thai food that is served in the adjoining restaurant at very reasonable prices. It's also a great place to stop for lunch if you are taking a shopping trip to the nearby Portobello Road Market (www.portobello.co.uk/), the world's largest antiques market.

Finally, you can't miss the English tradition of high or afternoon tea. While it is common in England to sip on tea all day long, high tea is an indulgent treat that counts as an entire meal. It usually includes your choice of several varieties of tea, finger sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and jam, and finally pastries and other desserts. Although high tea at London's finest hotels can be quite expensive, chains like **Richoux** (www.richoux.co.uk) offer a more informal and less expensive, but still delicious, experience.

While there are ways to find bargains eating out, the cheapest way to eat is probably going to be to buy food from the market and cook for yourself. **Tesco** is a local grocery/convenience store that has very good prices generally, and also frequently has specials on various items. Tesco also does home delivery of groceries. **Morrison's** and **Sainsbury** are two other grocery store chains, and all three have a good variety of pre-made meals, including a lot of different ethnic foods, like chicken tikka masala, or Jamaican beef patties, at very reasonable prices.

Shopping

Given the poor condition of the dollar against the pound, you may not be doing too much shopping when you get to London. However, if you do, you will want to know where to go. **Oxford Street** is a good place if you want established shops. These are not the cheapest places to go, but there is a range of stores, from high end all the way to much further down in the food chain. There are a range of **department stores**, including Debenhams, Selfridges, and John Lewis. None of these are bargain stores, but they might be good to check out if you need things like sheets, which may be otherwise hard to find. Apart from these big stores, you will also find stores like **H&M**, **Top Shop**, **Mangos**, **American Apparel**, and many smaller, non-chain stores. You can always view the street-level images for Oxford Street on the **Street Sensation website** (<http://streetsensation.co.uk/>) if you want to check it out before you make the trip. **Covent Garden** has a lot of interesting boutiques and is a great place to walk around, grab lunch, people watch, and shop, if your budget can handle all of that. **Westfield shopping centre**, near Shepherd's Bush tube station, is the biggest city-center mall in Europe.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Entertainment**

World-renowned **Harrods** is yet another department store, but is the definition of high-end. This store might fit better under “entertainment” than “shopping,” but even if you can’t buy your new fall wardrobe here, it is a place not to be missed! Shoe-voyeurs can get their fill on one of the floors devoted entirely to shoes. If salivating over the Jimmy Choos is not for you, head over to the incredible market area. Harrods is like Neiman Marcus meets Bristol Farms. They actually have ostrich eggs and other surprising foods in the market section—many of which are probably better to gawk at than eat. Once you tire of checking out the edible oddities, you can pick up some finger foods like egg rolls or sushi to snack on, or head to the adjacent room, which features wall-to-wall chocolate and pastries. If you’ve ever wondered what was so great about Turkish Delight, you can pick some up here, along with an assortment of delicious pasties, bonbons and other candies, teas, and coffees. If this wasn’t enough, across the hall is an equally tooth-decaying assortment of packaged candies, such as jelly beans, cotton candy, and even an in-house Krispy Kreme, for those of you who are craving some “Hot Donuts Now!” Clearly, Harrods is an experience, not just a store, and should not be missed just because it caters to the upper end of the income distribution.

While it has great stores, London’s markets are not to be missed. Not only are they great places to find pretty much whatever you are looking for at lower prices than established stores, you will find unique items there as well. **Portobello Road Market** located in Notting Hill is one of the more popular markets. While known for its antiques, it also has a number of stalls for clothing, jewelry and other miscellaneous items. While one of the more expensive markets, it is still worth a visit. It is open on Saturdays from 8a.m.-6:30 p.m. (closed on Sundays). **Spitalfields Market and the “Up-Market”** on Brick Lane, near Liverpool Street and Aldgate tubes, are busy on Sundays and abuzz with trendy music, vintage clothing and food from around the world. **Camden Lock Market** is open Saturday and Sunday from 10a.m.-6p.m. and sells a wide variety of items, including clothing, arts and crafts, jewelry and food. **Borough Market**, located on Borough High Street near London Bridge, operates on Friday from 12 to 6 and Saturday from 8 to 5. Borough market also has a Farmer’s Market on Saturday and is a good place to grab fresh food, and take in a little of the “British Experience.” For more information on these and 16 other markets around London, see www.streetsensation.co.uk/markets.htm for a map of the major markets and their hours.

Entertainment

One of the great things about living in London is the theater. There are many great—or at least interesting—performances going on at any given moment. The TKTS website has information about what shows are on sale, and prices for all performances (www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/tkts). Keep in mind that musicals are not the only great shows—Shakespeare and more modern productions abound (see the “plays” section of the TKTS website). While tickets generally aren’t cheap, there are ways to get deals, sometimes up to half-off the regular ticket price. One way is to go to the ticket booth of the theater where the performance is being shown up to an hour ahead of curtain and try to get last minute rush tickets.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Entertainment**

Another way to try to find lower-priced tickets is to check out the **TKTS booth** in Leicester Square (pronounced “Lester”). If you have been to the TKTS booth in New York, this works the same way. Tickets for the same day performance can be purchased at the TKTS booth or on the website. Be aware that there are a number of booths that advertise half-price and discount tickets. There are many of them in both Leicester Square and Covent Garden. Do not be fooled! These other booths or sellers will typically sell tickets for higher, not lower prices, the seats are very poor, and there is always the chance that the tickets may not even be legitimate. Stay away from them!! If you want to buy discount tickets, stick to the TKTS booth.

Finally, the **London Coliseum** is one of the largest theaters in London and home of the **English National Opera**. Visit www.eno.org/ to see what’s playing. Ticket prices range from approximately £20 for a balcony seat, all the way up to £85 for the best seats in the house. About 100 discount balcony tickets are sold on the day of the performance from 10a.m.

You can’t come to London without seeing the tourist sights. One great activity that you might want to do early on is a bus tour of the city. **The Original London Tour** is a convenient and enjoyable way to get acclimated to the city. While the tour isn’t the most informative, it’s a hop off/hop on tour, which means as it takes you around to various stops, you are free to get off, walk around, visit tourist sites, and then get back on the bus at any of its stops. Access to the tour lasts 24 hours, so even if you get a late start one day, you can make up for it on the next. It also comes with a free Thames River Cruise. The standard full-fare for adults is £22, but you can get a discount on your ticket with the International Student ID Card at: www.isecard.com/featured/originallondontour/index.html.

Many popular tour sites will be cheaper if you buy a ticket that gives you access to several as a package. Many sites also have reduced admission prices at certain times of day. A little bit of research could save you lots in the long run! The **London Pass** also offers a great opportunity to save money on a bundle of attractions. Check out www.londonpass.com/ for details.

If you were a fan of haunted houses as a child, or even as an adult, the **London Dungeon** is the place for you. In the dark and dingy underbelly of the capital the London Dungeon dwells, waiting to scare the life out of you and any visitors brave enough to cross the threshold. Confront your fears, face your worst nightmares, and uncover the gory truth behind some of history’s most horrific events! Learn the tortuous methods used by unscrupulous characters to the grisly details of London’s most prolific killers. Admission is £22.50 for students with ID and it includes Judgment Day boat ride. Be warned...at the London Dungeon you are more than a mere spectator!

On a less scary note, **St. Paul’s Cathedral** has overlooked the City of London since 604AD, a constant reminder for this great commercial center of the spiritual side of life. The current Cathedral—the fourth to occupy this site—was designed by the court architect Sir Christopher Wren and built between 1675 and 1710 after the previous cathedral was destroyed in the Great Fire of London. Important services have included the funerals of Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Winston Churchill, Jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria, peace services marking the end of the First and Second World Wars, the launch of the Festival of Britain; the Service of Remembrance and Commemoration for the 11th September 2001, and the 80th and 100th birthdays of Queen Elizabeth. A visit to the Cathedral and galleries is £8.50 for students.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Entertainment**

A guided tour of the cathedral costs an additional £3 for students. Buy your ticket online to avoid the line and remember your student ID!

For some free sightseeing, visit the **Houses of Parliament** and **The Clock Tower**, i.e. **Big Ben**. The Clock Tower is the world's largest four-faced, chiming clock. The structure is situated at the north-eastern end of the Houses of Parliament building in Westminster, London. It is often referred to as Big Ben—which is actually the main bell housed within the Clock Tower. Big Ben is one of London's best-known landmarks, and looks most spectacular at night when the clock faces are illuminated. If a light is shining above the clock face, you will know that Parliament is in session. The Houses of Parliament, otherwise known as The Palace of Westminster, stands on the site where Edward the Confessor had the original palace built in the first half of the eleventh century. The magnificent Gothic Revival masterpiece you see today was built between 1840 and 1888; this was the work of Charles Barry, who designed the buildings to blend with nearby Westminster Abbey. If you'd like to take a tour of the Houses of Parliament, this takes a little bit of work. Both houses are open to the general public for guided tours only for a limited season in July and August. During that period, the palace is open Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All tour tickets cost £12 for adults and £8 for students. For advance tickets call **0870 906 3773**.

Throughout its long history, the **Tower of London** has been England's most feared castle, a place of execution, torture and imprisonment. Its nickname "The Bloody Tower" says it all! However, during its colorful past the London Tower has also been a Royal Palace, an arsenal, a fortress, the royal mint, a menagerie, a jewel house, and now a major tourist site. London visitors can discover its long and eventful history, its buildings and collections. A trip to the Tower Of London includes access to the Crown Jewels exhibition and Royal Armouries. As one of the most famous castles in the world, Tower of London tickets normally cost £17.00 for an adult ticket, £14.50 for students, and £9.50 for children.

If you're really interested in visiting palaces during your stay in London, passes such as the Royal Pass or the Three Palaces Pass provide discounted entry to three of the royal palaces such as The Tower of London, **Hampton Court Palace**, **Kensington Palace** and the Banqueting House, and **Whitehall**. Information about these and other similar passes is widely available online. It is also fun (and free!) to visit **Buckingham Palace** and watch the changing of the guard. Check here for the schedule: changing-guard.com/dates-buckingham-palace.html. Palace tours are £15 for students (must bring ID).

As the largest and slowest Ferris wheel in the world, the **London Eye** offers a beautiful view of London (including a spectacular view of Westminster). It costs £15.50 per passenger and you can buy tickets ahead of time to avoid the line at www.londoneye.com.

ZSL London Zoo in Regent's Park is one of the most famous of all London attractions and a must-see if you have children. Opened in 1828, ZSL London Zoo is the world's oldest scientific zoo. It today houses over 750 different species of animal and is the only zoo in London where you can experience big animals such as elephants, rhinos and giraffes. With over 12,000 animals to see and incredible animal displays, including feedings and keeper talks, throughout the day you could easily spend a whole day at this London attraction. Normal price ranges from £15 - £18.50, but bring your student ID for a discount.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Entertainment**

While in London, one must visit a few of the great museums this city has to offer. Regardless of your interests, there is at least one museum for everyone. Many of London's best **museums** and **art galleries** are free, including the **British Museum, Tate Britain, Tate Modern**, and the **National Gallery**. All of these have impressive and expansive collections which can be enjoyed without spending a cent! They may charge admission for advertised or touring exhibits, however. The **British Museum** is England's most popular museum and boasts over four million exhibits. It became a magnet for all the loot being amassed by the British Empire through the 19th century and it still houses the British Library where Marx plotted capitalism's downfall. Key exhibits include the Egyptian Hall, the Tomb of Payava, the Elgin Marbles & the Sutton Hoo treasure, and the Magna Carta. The museum is open every day from 10:00a.m.-5:30p.m., and stays open until 8:30p.m. on Fridays.

Another favorite is the **Natural History Museum**. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in London, both inside and out, and makes a wonderful family trip. Kids love the full-sized moving dinosaur displays and the earthquake simulator. Fun aside, the museum has played an important part in expanding our understanding of the natural world. The Earth Galleries, adjacent to the main museum, provide a lesson in physical geography and geology. The museum is open every day from 10:00a.m.-5:50p.m., with last admission at 5:30p.m. Entry is free and the nearest tube is South Kensington.

If you're a science buff, the **Science Museum** in London is the place for you. The Science Museum contains more than 10,000 exhibits from the nation's collection ranging from the Panhard et Lavassor car to the Apollo 10 Command module. Come out and learn about the science behind crime detection, spying and security. It's open from 10a.m.-6p.m. every day and admission is free. The nearest tube is South Kensington so you can visit this museum and the Natural History Museum on the same day.

Another interesting museum to visit while in London is the **Imperial War Museum**. This extensive war museum is located on the site of the infamous Bedlam lunatic asylum and chronicles the history of conflict from World War I to the present. The sophisticated exhibits and excellent paintings throughout convey the horror, fear and confusion inflicted during conflict. It is open daily from 10:00a.m.-6:00p.m. Admission is free but there may additional charges for special exhibitions. The nearest tube is Lambeth North. For war history buffs, the **Churchill War Rooms** are a must. Visitors tour the underground complex where Churchill spent much of World War II and peruse extensive exhibits on the prime minister's life. It is open daily from 9:30a.m.-6p.m., and the nearest tube stop is Westminster.

If you can only visit one museum while abroad, make it the **Museum of London**. It is the world's largest history museum with 1.1 million objects and documents the city's history from prehistory to the present day. It is primarily concerned with the social history of London and its inhabitants throughout history. The museum is located close to the Barbican Centre, overlooking the remains of the Roman city wall and on the edge of the oldest part of London, known as the City, now the financial district. It is a few minutes walk from St. Paul's Cathedral so we recommend visiting these two sites in the same day. Admission is free and it is open daily from 10:00a.m.-6p.m. Last admission is at 5:30p.m.

OPIA Cheap Living Guide to London: **Entertainment**

Finally, The **Bank of England Museum** (M-F 10:00a.m.-5:00p.m.), tells the story of the Bank of England from its foundation in 1694 to its role today as the Central Bank of the United Kingdom, while the **Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood** (daily 10:00a.m.-5:45p.m.) is Britain's only museum highlighting the life of children through the centuries. Entry is free for both museums.