



# Travel Like a Local

## London Edition

by  
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Welcome to the OWA's "Travel Like a Local" series, brought to you by the International Expansion Committee, where we share a little bit about the places in the world we call home. Here, we reveal our top tips for truly immersing yourself and experiencing our cities beyond the top landmarks. Whether you're traveling for work or taking a well-deserved vacation, we hope you find this series useful as you plan your visit. In this month's edition, I delve into how to experience London like a local.

Having visited London many times over the years to attend industry events such as 100% Optical, it's only in the past 18 months, since relocating for work, that I feel I've truly begun to know the city, and even then, I'm still constantly discovering new neighbourhoods, activities, and restaurants. People say New York is the city that never sleeps, but I'm convinced London might just give it a run for its money!

While its iconic sights such as Big Ben and Buckingham Palace draw millions, a true London experience lies in discovering the daily rhythms and hidden gems that locals cherish. I'm excited to share my favourite ways to experience London beyond the guidebooks.



# Getting around like a Londoner



Getting around London is remarkably easy thanks to the city's extensive transport network, there's a mode to suit every traveller. To make navigating a little easier, I highly recommend downloading the Citymapper app. It's a favourite for planning journeys, offering real-time updates and the most efficient routes across the city.

- Embrace public transport: The London Underground known as *the Tube* is very efficient and covers most of the city, it's usually faster than travelling by car due to traffic levels particularly in central London. Oyster Cards are no longer essential as you can simply tap your card for contactless payment at the barrier as you head towards the platform. You simply tap out with the same card when you arrive at your destination.
- Don't overlook London's iconic red double-decker buses for a scenic way to take in the sights as you make your way through the city. At just £1.75 for a single journey and with a cap of £5.25 per day it's also an affordable way to get around.
- Feeling adventurous? Santander Cycles commonly referred to as Boris Bikes are dotted throughout central London. They're a convenient and active way to explore neighbourhoods at your own pace. Simply scan the QR code and you're set. There are numerous apps for renting eBikes and scooters throughout the city. Keep within the designated bike lanes and be mindful of pedestrians and traffic.
- Looking for an iconic London cab (taxi)? Apps such as Free Now and Gett are popular ways to book one or you can simply hail a taxi as it passes. Uber is also available.
- Set sail on the River Thames: Uber Boat by Thames Clippers goes from Putney in the west to Barking Riverside in east London, passing by many iconic sights such as Big Ben, the London Eye and more along the way. Pre-book online or pay as you board and tap out when you exit at your destination.



# Dining like a Local



London is overflowing with culinary options, whether you're after a traditional Sunday roast, a lively brunch, or the perfect pizza, the capital's neighbourhoods and markets promise endless variety.

## Explore the Markets

To experience London's food scene like a local, start at one of its bustling markets, popular choices include Camden Market, Spitalfields Market and Borough Market. If you're going at the weekend expect a crowd, however the lines move pretty quickly. Seven Dials Market in Covent Garden is a personal favourite, especially the buttermilk fried chicken tacos and empanadas from Los Gordos, followed by a sweet treat from Little Pudding. There's a huge array of vendors here to cater for all tastes and lots of seating too.

## Pizzas: Local Favourites

London's pizza scene is thriving, from Detroit to NYC style pizza, London has it all. Base Face Pizza with locations in Richmond, Putney and Barnes is a standout for me, serving neapolitan-style pizzas paired with delicious cocktails. I highly recommend ordering a side of dough sticks with their incredible garlic butter dip.

## Brunch Hotspots

Brunch is a true weekend ritual for many in London. EggBreak in Notting Hill is a top choice, with a menu full of classics like eggs benedict, french toast and pancakes, covering every craving from sweet to savoury. They don't take bookings, so go early to avoid queues. Megan's, is another popular option for brunch, with locations all over the city, offering mediterranean-inspired dishes; the hot honey halloumi avo toast is my go-to.





# Two Must-Visit Neighbourhoods



When you're exploring London, two neighbourhoods I highly recommend checking out which can often be overlooked are Richmond and Chiswick. These areas are filled with character and things to do.

## Richmond

Richmond is located in southwest London and is known for its green spaces and riverside views. Richmond is accessible via bus, the under and overground as well as national rail. One of my favourite spots is Richmond Park, one of London's largest. It's an ideal spot for a long walk, spotting deer, and just enjoying the great outdoors. If you're a fan of the series Ted Lasso, you'll recognise Richmond as the show's setting. Another thing I love doing is taking a stroll along Richmond Riverside there are some great riverside pubs where you can grab a drink or stop for some lunch. Richmond Hill is an essential spot to take in stunning views over the river.

## Chiswick

Also located in west London, Chiswick is known for its village-like feel and historic sites. Chiswick is accessible via the underground, national rail and via bus. Chiswick House and Gardens is a must-see with its 18th century architecture and extensive gardens. Every Sunday on Chiswick High Road, there's a market that rotates between themes such as cheese, flowers, books, and antiques. It's always got a great vibe and you never know what you might find. There's also a large array of local pubs and cafes in Chiswick worth checking out. And if you're into history, you should definitely check out Hogarth's House.

Both Richmond and Chiswick offer a mix of natural beauty, cultural experiences and local charm. They're perfect for anyone looking to see a different side of London outside of the bustling city center.



# Final Thoughts

London never stops surprising me, no matter how many neighbourhoods I explore or brunch spots I try, there's always something new just around the corner. I hope sharing some of my favourite places and top tips helps you get the most out of your own adventure in this amazing city. If you're planning a visit or want more insider tips, feel free to [connect on LinkedIn](#). I'd be happy to help you make the most of your trip!

