



6 months

a guide to live in england



Hello and welcome to England!

About 200,000 US citizens call the UK home. Would you like to be one of them?

England feels like the cultural, historical older sister to the US. Many have family ties in Great Britain and feel a deep connection to it's culture. Is it surprising many Americans seriously consider making a move abroad to England?

That's why I designed this guide. Whether your move here is temporary or permanent , here's what you need to know to make England home for up to 6 months. Let's go!

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What to expect

You've heard me recommend making a pre-move exploratory trip before making that big move abroad. From personal experience I know there's a big difference to live somewhere permanently vs as a visitor.

Becoming a permanent resident requires a change in mindset and practicalities. It's much different than dipping your toe in as a temporary visitor.

First your MINDSET. When you're visiting, you only see the good. You're skimming over the top of real life and experiencing the best local life has to offer. It's thrilling and exciting to travel, seeing famous sites ([Downton Abby](#) anyone?) and getting caught up in the magic of what life could be like living in England.

I've done it myself. In fact I spent several years going back and forth between the UK and the US before becoming a more permanent resident. My initial plan was to split my time between the US and England; have the best of both worlds. I wasn't sure if I wanted to give up living in the US, having spent most of my life there.

From experience I'd say give yourself the gift of time. As a US citizen (if you're moving from another country please check entry requirements) you're allowed to spend up to 6 months at a time in the UK. Take advantage of this! Try out living here before committing to a long term move.

What to expect

As far as I know, there's no restriction on returning to the US and then coming back for another 6 months. But if you do this too often UK border control will think you're trying to set up residence here! Of course we'd love to have you, but keep this in mind. Let's start with 6 months and then go from there.

Second PRACTICALITIES. Setting up life in England as a full time resident requires having the legal right to remain here and comes with both benefits and drawbacks.

Full time residency gives you the ability to buy and rent property. It also means you may be liable for taxes, eligible for health care and be able to vote.

Living here as a temporary resident has a different set of benefits. As a temporary resident you can enjoy all the lovely scenery, history, culture and experiences without worrying about the the legal aspects of permanent residency.

As a temporary resident you'll still feel a bit like a tourist albeit a very special sort of visitor. You'll fall into that rather glamorous category of people who swan about from country to country. "Oh this little place? It's my home in England". Which translates to not exactly living like a local but the next best thing.

Do you see where I'm going with this?

Living in England for up to 6 months is just that. You're not a resident, you're a tourist with privileges. You'll be able to experience life here more fully than if you'd just hopped over for a vacation but not as fully as if you committed to full time residency..

Living in England as a temporary resident has advantages and disadvantages



Living in England as a non Resident

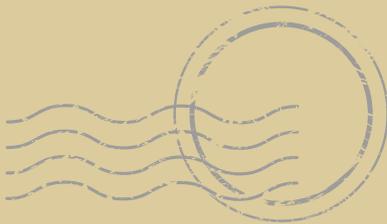
What You Can't Do

- rent a long term property
- buy a home
- vote
- obtain credit
- get NHS benefits
- get benefits such as free bus pass or reduced National Rail travel
- register a car
- obtain a UK driving license



What You Can Do

- open bank account with proof of address
- rent short term property
- travel freely
- drive on US license for 12 months
- use US credit cards
- use US debit card
- get UK sim for phone



What to expect

BANKING: Most rentals, utilities etc are paid by debit through a direct withdrawal from a UK bank account.

- Without a UK bank account, you won't be able to set up any service requiring a recurring payment. It's also a common way to pay individuals for service; with a direct one time or recurring payment ("standing order") from your UK bank account.
- Your bank account is assigned an account number and "sort code" which is used to send or receive a payment.

UTILITIES: In the UK utilities ask to set up a direct debit, usually no deposit is required. Of course this only applies if utilities aren't included in your monthly rental.

- You'll be responsible for reading your meter unless a smart meter's been installed. You can easily swap between providers unless you sign a long term deal which I don't recommend.
- Search for [information and rates](#) for both gas/electric/internet (broadband) and phone service [here](#)..

RENTALS: If you qualify for long term residency and are eligible to rent (let) a home, expect a 6 month lease (tenancy) with the option to renew on a month by month or longer term when it expires. You may be expected to pay 6 months rent upfront before moving in as I did.

- Most long term rentals in England will come unfurnished similar to the US. In Scotland, especially in cities like Edinburgh, rentals will be available furnished. It's not unusual for rentals in vacation areas to be available for "winter lets" from November to May, furnished and with utilities included.

MAIL: Mail service works about the same in the UK as in the US. It's rare to find a stand alone post office, usually they'll be inside a WH Smith, small grocery or stationery store.

- Instead of using UPS for packages, expect to see Hermes, Royal Mail and DPD or DHL.



Getting there

TIPS: Flights from US to London

At the moment travel and the cost to travel is changing constantly. Right now US visitors are allowed to travel into the UK which is good news.

As I write this, the US is limiting travel into the US, but getting ready to open up to UK and EU travelers. Until normal traffic resumes in both directions, transatlantic flights may be limited making fares higher than usual. I expect as travel resumes prices will come down.

I recommend flying non stop whenever possible, especially during winter months. First it's less stressful. You'll be flying long distances, west to east overnight and it's easier to settle down to sleep if you don't have to worry about a connection. Second once you take off you won't have to worry about weather delays complicating your connections. Third, you won't have to go through security more than once.



Seating

Look into upgrading your seat to premium economy or higher if budget allows. When airlines price each direction separately I would recommend at least upgrading on the flight to London. You'll get a better nights rest in a more comfortable seat and arrive the next morning rested not exhausted. Flying back home will be during daylight hours and isn't as critical to comfort, but if you can afford it, go Premium both directions.

You know what your seat preferences are but I always try to book as close to the entrance door as possible, near the front of the plane. This makes getting out faster on arrival.

Getting there

Baggage

You can book luggage requirements differently for both segments of your trip. To the UK, I would advise getting one carry on and 1 full size baggage allowance fare. In the past I've taken an empty packable bag inside one of my full bags.

On your return trip you may need more space to bring back all those goodies. Paying for an extra bag on this leg makes sense.

If on the other hand, you're moving over to England, paying for an additional bag on the flight to London makes sense. I've done this and it's a lot cheaper to pay for an additional bag or two than paying to ship items. If you just don't think you can live without them of course.

Booking a Flight Tips

- buy 60-90 days in advance
- week days are cheaper than weekends
- avoid Fri, Sat, Sun & Mon
- use private mode on your browser while searching
- go off-peak for best fares
- late fall, winter, early spring in UK is off peak
- pay for seat upgrade

Sample Air Fares

October 21/2021 departure to March 21/2022

Non stop • Economy • Round trip

Most international carriers fly to London Heathrow LHR

New York to London - JFK to LHR

Flight time in hours: 7+

Airlines: British Airways, American, Jet Blue, Virgin Atlantic, Finnair, Delta, KLM
from \$475.

Boston to London - BOS to LHR

Flight time: 6.5

Airlines: British Airways, American, Virgin Atlantic, Jet Blue, Finnair, Delta, KLM
from \$475.

Atlanta to London - ATL to LHR

Flight time: 8

Airlines: British Airways, American, Virgin Atlantic, Finnair, Delta, KLM
from \$700.

Dallas/Ft to London - DFW to LHR

Flight time: 9

Airlines: British Airways, American, Finnair, Delta, Iberia
from \$700.

Los Angeles to London - LAX to LHR

Flight time: 10.5

Airlines: British Airways, American, Finnair, Delta, Iberia, KLM, Virgin Atlantic
from \$570.

Getting there..

You have several options once you land at Heathrow. In this article, I go into detail on [how to get into central London](#).

Another choice is to hire (rent) a car at the airport and drive to your destination or take [public transportation](#).

Americans are so used to driving we automatically default to that option to get around but here's what to consider before you rent a car.

- driving on the other side of the road
- narrow streets and confusing road signage
- high cost of gas
- standard shift transmission with a high premium for automatic

Rental Cars

You'll find many familiar brands in the UK but don't count on being able to use any US discount programs you have. If you have a Costco membership, I'd recommend using that to get a great price on a UK or European rental car.

Car rental companies

[Costco](#)

[Dollar](#)

[Alamo](#)

[Thrifty](#)

[Hertz](#)

[Budget](#)

[Europcar](#)

Another option is car sharing or renting a car hourly. If cars are available near you, you can register with your US driving license.

[Co Wheels](#)

- per hour from £4.75
- per day from £33.25
- Insurance & fuel included but an additional per mile charge of 0.18

Getting there..

Public Transportation

When I first came to live in England, getting around using only public transportation was quite a novelty but it can come with a steep learning curve! Let me help..

Trains

I've written extensively about [train travel here](#) but what you really need to do is to sign up to an account on [Trainline](#). Use your US credit card with Settings to show prices in dollars if you choose.

The more in advance you buy tickets the better the price but it's possible to buy a fairly cheap ticket on the day of travel. It just depends when you want to go and your destination. Commuting times are the most expensive.

The [Trainline](#) app gives you a heads up on where to change trains to get to your destination and alerts you to potential problems like cancellations or delays too.

Buses

If the rail network is the artery or backbone of public transportation here, buses are the veins. Buses connect all the smaller towns and villages. There are national coaches (buses) for cross country travel but most towns and counties are served by local bus services.

The national coaches serve Heathrow and Gatwick airports so they may be a good option if your town doesn't have direct train service to the airport. There's no train to/from Heathrow - except into London - but there's extensive train service to Gatwick.



Getting there..

Public Transportation

Buses

One way to get to Heathrow airport is take the train to Reading and then get on Heathrow Railair coach service

National coach or long distance buses can be cheaper than trains but I wouldn't recommend them unless there's no other option as they can take much longer than a train.

Unfortunately there's no app a la Trainline to manage your bus travel.

I advise using Google maps to search for where you want to go and choose the public transportation icon instead of car. Next step pick a time because that will affect what services are available. All your options will come up and you'll be able to see which bus will take you where you need to go.

Most local buses use regional apps for payment. If you plan on using that bus system often, download the app to make paying by CC with your phone easier than coming up with the right change. Tickets are sold as singles (one way) or return (round trip).

[Local bus times website](#)

[National Express bus service](#)

[Heathrow Railair](#)



Where to stay

Where to stay best towns & cities

Where to stay is one of the most important decisions to make once you've decided to spend more time in England

Are you envisioning living in a city or experiencing the English countryside. Or a bit of both? What's your preference when it comes to lifestyle. Do you like the idea of the hustle and bustle of living in a London neighborhood with endless options for culture, eating out and the buzz of city life?

Will you prefer to live somewhere you don't need a car? Perhaps a slightly smaller city with lots of cafes, shops and amenities within walking distance but a less hectic pace will suit you.

Or the best of both worlds? A town with easy access to public transport and cities but easy to get to know your way around to walk and explore.

I've come up with a selection of cities and towns to suit whichever lifestyle you choose while you're here.

Depending on how long you'd like to stay, you will likely need to consider multiple locations. It's unlikely you'll be able to find a short term accommodation for a full 6 months unless you're traveling in the off season of November to April. This is known as a winter let and is sometimes available in coastal towns or summer vacation hotspots.

Each recommendation is rated by my own observations, which will help you decide which location will best fit your needs.



Where to stay:

Lewes



Lewes is close enough to get into London for the day yet small enough to not feel overwhelming

Lewes is my top pick hands down. I've spent over 6 months here with many visits too numerous to count.

It's the perfect blend of easy access to London, countryside with walks along the Downs and not too far from the sea.

Plus gorgeous architecture, thriving restaurant and pub scene, lovely antique and independent shops with a posh little cinema and cafe. What more could you ask for!

If you love: A smallish town with everything.
Nature, shopping, easy access to coast or London
Distance to London by train: 1+ hour

Vacation Rental Agencies

[Visit Lewes](#)

[Amberley House Cottages](#)

[Bramley & Teal](#)



winter let potential



favorite stores



easy access to airports



train service to London



Where to stay:

Windsor



Windsor is close to London, more urban, but nice neighborhoods and Windsor castle

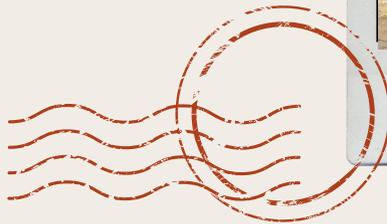
Windsor enjoys regular train service to London, sits on the Thames and has the pretty town of Eton just across the river.

It has a more cosmopolitan feel because it's close to London and with lots of shops, both High St (chain) and independent there's always something to do.

One favorite is Daniel of Windsor, a one of a kind department store. Stay in Old Windsor.

If you love: Being on the Queen's doorstep with easy access to London and plenty of shopping and dining.

Distance to London by train: 1 hour



Where to stay:

Guildford



Guildford is a highly desirable commuter town outside of London

Guildford is known for its eclectic cobbled High Street with the medieval Guildford Castle in its center.

It's also within easy access to several National Trust properties like Wisley, Polesden Lacey and Loseley Park.

Lots of shopping, cafes, restaurants and pubs make for a very lively lifestyle without a hectic pace.

If you love: A medium size town with upper class vibe close to London by train

Distance to London by train: 1/2 - 1 hour



Where to stay

Westminster - London



If you want to stay within London's bustling city center, you can't go wrong with Westminster borough.

Central to everywhere you may want to travel outside or within London with easy access to Victoria Station, Westminster has a residential feel that I appreciate.

A little calm within the hustle and bustle. Within easy access to the Thames, Westminster bridge and the Houses of Parliament.

I would highly recommend Dolphin Square for your long term stay.

If you love: Being in the center of London but in a quiet residential area

Distance to London by train: 0



Where to stay

Bath



Bath is known as a Roman spa town well known for its stunning Georgian architecture and association with Jane Austen.

Nestled in the Somerset countryside Bath is surrounded by beautiful towns and countryside perfect for exploring when you want a break from this very manageable city.

Bath is surrounded by gentle hills and it's possible to stay just outside the busy town center but still enjoy all the shopping, culture and buzz in town.

Can be quite touristy in the Southgate shopping center. Get your fix of stunning movie locations like Bridgerton and Pride and Prejudice.

If you love: History, culture, literature and shopping along with a big dose of incredible architecture

Distance to London by train: 1 1/2 hours

Vacation Rental Agencies

Bath Self Catering

Bath Holiday Rentals



Where to stay

Bradford on Avon



Just southeast of Bath on the same train line is Bradford on Avon a small pretty town with a population of about 10,000

If you'd prefer to be closer to country living while having easy access to Bath, this very liveable town sits astride the Avon river and the Kennet Avon canal.

Nice pubs, small shops and a towpath to walk along and view narrowboats as they make their way up and down the canal locks.

Very picturesque with similar architecture to Bath on a smaller scale.

If you love: A peaceful historic town you can walk and aren't too worried about lots of shopping and culture

Distance to London by train: 1 3/4 hours

Vacation Rental Agencies

Bath Self Catering

Bath Holiday Rentals



Where to stay

Eastbourne



Eastbourne's a good choice if you want easy access to London while being on the coast and you don't want the full on whirl of Brighton. It's a traditional English seaside town with pier not too far from Lewes or Brighton.



My favorite neighborhood is the Meads area, an historical section of town with it's own small High Street which abuts the South Downs.

The best part is from here you can walk over the Downs to Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters, two iconic local landmarks.

If you love: a traditional seaside town with easy access to walks and aren't too picky about better shops or culture

Distance to London by train: 1 1/2 hours

Vacation Rental Agencies

[Eastbourne Holiday Cottages](#)



Where to stay

Lymington



For a completely unique experience, Lymington is a coastal town in Hampshire with a big sailing vibe.

Lymington is also a ferry port so you can take a quick ferry ride over to the Isle of Wight to visit Osbourne House, Cowes or the Needles.

You'll be able to take walks along the coast, watch sailboats and ferries navigate out into the Channel and relax amongst cobbled stoned streets and a small town feel.

There's a small harbor but no beaches and shopping

If you love: Sailing, being on the coast, a small scale town you can get around easily and don't need world class shopping or dining.
Distance to London by train: 2 hours

Vacation Rental Agencies

[New Forest Cottages](#)

[Mulberry Cottages](#)

[New Forest Living](#)



Where to stay

Edinburgh



I love Edinburgh although I've only been there in September! I

It's in Scotland and can be quite a bit chillier than England.

But it's a vibrant lovely city that oozes culture, charm and history.

Can be a bit touristy in spots, avoid August as you won't find anywhere to stay.

But the city is the perfect jumping off point to explore Scotland. We rented a place for two weeks and used Edinburgh as a base.

If you love: Scottish culture, wool, whisky, history, shopping and being able to explore more of Scotland

Distance to London by train: 4 1/2-5 hours

Vacation Rental Agencies

Dickins Homes from Home



Where to stay

In addition to the local agencies I've listed, here's some national agencies to help you find accommodation. In the UK, holiday cottages are a big business and there's a lot more choice than in the US.

I highly recommend using a local agency. You'll be dealing with a business, so you have recourse if something goes wrong or if you need help. Also a local business knows the area and can help you with planning your stay, finding local businesses and information.

With an agency you'll need to pay a deposit to secure your booking. The timing to pay in full can change due to current circumstances, so please be sure to ask when booking.

Due to current demand, vacation rentals are being booked far in advance into 2022. I'd advise that once you know your dates, be sure to secure your accommodation with a deposit as soon as possible!

I've used Airbnb many times, but I prefer using an agency. You'll be getting a professional service with much more accountability than if you book through an individual. Also I think rental agencies are more competitive in pricing.

Vacation Rental Agencies

Use these national agencies to expand your search

- [Cottages.com](#)
- [Holiday Cottages](#)
- [Original Cottages](#)
- [Independent Cottages](#)
- [Classic Cottages](#)
- [Sykes Cottages](#)
- [VRBO](#)
- [Airbnb](#)

What to Bring

What to bring

- dual voltage electronics like phones, tablets, laptops, computers, Kindles, some electric toothbrushes
- drug store medications you prefer
- prescriptions with enough refills to last you while you're away
- converter plugs for US to UK or EU
- Melatonin if you use for sleep - isn't sold in UK

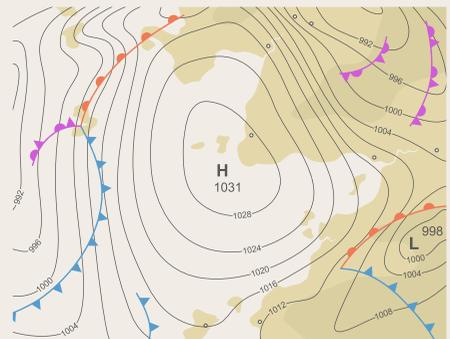
What NOT to bring

- any appliance that's NOT dual voltage
- medication such as Viagra, Buscopan (IBS relief) and Zovirax (cold sore) are available over the counter
- hairdryer or curling iron - better to buy here

Weather

Temperate Maritime

- not usually colder than 32F (0C) in winter or higher than 89F (32C) in summer
- damp and very changeable
- warmest months are July and August, although September can be just as warm
- May, June, September and October nicest months to travel, drier and warm
- southern England gets the most sunshine - no surprise
- although hot days in summer are rare they do happen, but typically don't last more than a few days



What to Bring

Weather

Ah the weather. I have been known to say “no one comes here for the weather” and I’m afraid it’s true. Of course when the sun is shining there’s nowhere more glorious than the English countryside with its endless blue skies and massive white clouds.



However the reverse is also true. There’s nothing more daunting than day after day of solid grey skies. Unless of course you’re used to Seattle, the northwest or northeast or enjoy a good overcast day!

Average annual rain or snow fall in the UK can vary widely but a good median is about 1500 mm or 59 inches. Expect average and be prepared for more. No one ever complains it doesn’t rain enough. Except perhaps the farmers.

Almost 60 inches is quite a lot of rain when you’re not used to it. For example annual average rainfall in Colorado is between 12- 25 inches which includes snowfall. By contrast average rainfall in Massachusetts is about 43 inches.

The big difference between England and most of the US is that temperatures are moderate. You won’t get any wild swings like you get in mountainous CO for example. Even though England sits in a northern latitude, its temperatures are moderated by the Gulf stream and rarely get too hot or too cold. Perfect for those Goldilocks!

Long heavy downpours are rare here. Usually it will be more of a steady misty rain or a short sharp shower that’s over quickly.

What to Bring

Rainfall

It's tempting to give statistics for average rainfall but due to climate change and the changeability of the English climate, it's not very helpful.

It can be just as cold and wet in August as April for example. Periods of drought aren't unknown, but it's best to be prepared for a 30-50% chance of rain most days with clouds. I've learned that with substantial cloud cover around, it can easily turn cooler and shower without warning.

Fall, winter and early spring are the wettest months and the further north you go, the colder and wetter the weather will be. Scotland will always be that much cooler than southern England.

Daylight Hours

One thing that may catch you off guard is the difference in daylight and length of days. Because England is in the far north hemisphere - latitude 50 - 60 N - winter days are very short with summer days much longer by comparison.

Hours of Daylight - London

December: 7:50

June: 16:40

Hours of Sunlight - London

December - 1

June - 7



What to Bring

What to Wear

Be prepared. For an extended visit, you may wait til you get here to buy footwear and jackets. Once you see how you adapt to the temperate climate you'll know for sure what you need for your activities.

Unless you live in a state with rainy or cold weather, you may not understand what you need to keep wind, chill and rain out. Since I've moved here, I've gone through multiple coat and footwear combinations to find the perfect balance and I'm still working on it!

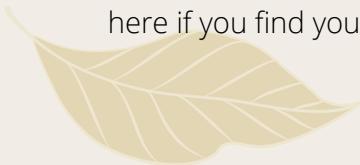
I've included some favorite US retailers I'd shop at before leaving. Shopping stateside will cost you a lot less than here.

A quilted Eddie Bauer jacket I bought before I left the US is now worn on repeat. It's similar to the kind of padded jacket you can get here with enough warmth and reasonably shower proof. Which means not meant for a downpour but still keeps the rain from soaking you. Unfortunately they no longer stock it which is annoying!

My Eddie Bauer jacket is similar to the Barbour jackets you see here. They're meant to be worn in all weathers, preferably while you're driving your Range Rover or mucking out the stables!

Just as important is the right kind of footwear. Comfortable, stylish, warm and hopefully waterproof. The most important quality of any shoe is, is it comfortable? Can you walk for miles across fields and paths or through London streets with ease.

Brits love their sandals and will wear them with a down jacket. While sandals are perfect for hot weather, I've found that even a small heel can get caught in a cobbled or uneven walkway and that's all it takes to lose balance and twist an ankle. Why not look for a pair once you get here if you find you need them?



What to Bring

Top tips on what to pack

- light layers during all seasons
- gloves & scarves for warmth
- packable breathable hat
- lightweight folding umbrella
- versatile tote or cross body bag

Shopping Resources

USA

[Eddie Bauer](#)

[Athleta](#)

[LL Bean](#)

[Sierra Trading Post](#)

UK

[Marks & Spencer](#)

[Cotswold Outdoors](#)

[Mountain Warehouse](#)

[Clarks Village](#)

[Bicester Village](#)

[Designer Outlet Swindon](#)

What to Bring

Packing Lists - Clothing

- scarves (lightweight and heavier for winter)
- long sleeve t-shirts
- light weight wool sweater(s)
- light weight sweatshirt hoodie
- down vest
- down or windproof jacket
- hat for wind/rain
- thick stretch leggings
- stretchy travel pants
- stretch jeans
- walking shoes
- lightweight jogging pants
- socks, undies, slipper socks, bras, sleepwear



Obviously this list is intended for women!

What to Bring

Packing list - everything else

- phone, tablet or laptop
- charging plugs or station, cords
- plug converters (US to UK or EU) - can be bought in UK
- travel hairdryer (although may not work well with 220V)
- travel water bottle
- wheelie suitcase (1-2)
- backpack for extra storage and day trips
- cross body bag
- small notebook



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Packing list - everything else

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My Recommendations: Top 5 Travel Tips

Don't miss my special recommendations

1. Tripit app

Tripit app is indispensable for keeping track of flights, hotels, even train trips. It sorts it all in chronological order so you can see at a glance where you're supposed to be!

2. Apple Wallet

Keep your credit and debit cards in Apple Wallet for iPhone. A US credit card triggers a signature request no matter how small the transaction, so this is a quick and safe way to pay by CC. I also store my digital train tickets in Wallet which can be scanned instead of carrying a ticket.

3. Banking apps

Get access to all your US banking and investment accounts by installing those apps on your phone. Make sure you download the apps before you leave the US

4. Whatsapp

If you don't already use it, install Whatsapp on your phone so you can make free calls back to the US while you're away.

5. Passwords

Make sure you have all your passwords with you before you leave home. Store them in a password app or a safe place you'll have access to without cell or wifi service.

Culture

If you've followed me you may know I'm both American and English. Although I consider myself an expat here, I was born in England so technically I'm not. However I spent the majority of my life in Canada and the US so I bring a different perspective to life here in England. I'm empathetic to the British way of life but at the same time I'm used to the American ways!

I've written this 6 month guide primarily for Americans as that's the culture I'm most familiar with but hopefully you'll find it helpful no matter where you're traveling from.

It's one thing to be prepared on a physical level to live in another country even for a short time, but it's a whole other ball game to understand cultural differences and make your stay a memorable one. You won't want to feel like an outsider but you will and that's OK!



Culture

The good news is that Brits have an equal fascination with Americans and their culture as we do about theirs. Your accent will elicit curiosity and conversation.

They'll want to share their experiences of traveling in the US with you and will be curious about where you're from and what matters to you. I've had many Brits tell me they love my accent and I always laugh because of course I think they're the ones with the accent!



Don't worry about putting your foot in your mouth or making some dangerous faux pas. I've found most Brits are very tolerant and happy to indulge our ignorance to a point.

Here's my observations about what you can get away with and what to avoid. If you want to fit in with the British culture there are certain habits that are ingrained and if you flaunt them you'll find it harder to be accepted and invited into their lives.

Culture

DON'T do this

- Jump a queue or line!

Brits are used to standing in a line for just about everything. From getting on a bus, to waiting for a ticket to getting a coffee. It may not be obvious right away but there's a pecking order. If you show up, be aware that others before you are waiting and if you wait to take your turn you'll be rewarded with a smile

- Say "this is how we do it in the States".

Yes I know it's almost unavoidable at times when you're trying to explain your point of view but try to refrain from pointing out how much better washing machines are in the US or something similar. This is a universal rule by the way. Wherever you travel no one really wants to hear that it's better somewhere else. They already have a sneaky suspicion that's true!

- Get into political or religious discussions

This is frowned upon here although I had many people ask me how I felt about Trump during the elections. They may be curious but let them bring up the topic. Whatever you do avoid talking about Brexit!

- Talk too loudly.

Unless you're in a pub at closing time or everyone is shouting at a football or rugby game then keep the volume down. Generally folks are a lot more reserved here and they may tune you out if they perceive you're a loud talker.

- Expect to talk about how you feel.

Yes I know this sounds silly but it's amazing how well most Brits keep a lid on how they actually feel about anything. It's as if they don't want you to know their private business! Feelings, thoughts, fears etc aren't freely shared even amongst friends. So don't be surprised if your confessions aren't reciprocated.

Culture

DO this

- Say “morning” when you pass someone on the street
- Greet someone before asking a question. I still use the American “Hello, how are you...?” and get a few confused looks but you know what I mean
- Ask before asking - for example “Excuse me... would you mind if I...?”
- Offer to buy the next round at the pub if you’ve been treated to a drink
- Use “please” and “thank you” - a lot. Brits are persnickety about politeness
- Wait until everyone is off the bus/train before you get on
- Say thank you or “cheers” to the bus driver when you get off



Culture

In closing I'll say that you can't go wrong with keeping your opinions to yourself and being overly polite!

I know that sounds harsh but it's just to remind you that culturally we're very different from one another even if it seems like we shouldn't be. "Two countries separated by a common language" sums it up pretty well!

Once you're around friends or family you can relax a little. Just remember you're a visitor. Since I know I'm perceived as American, I always try to be on my best behavior.

Although Brits have a reputation for being very reserved, underneath they're just like you and me. Ask politely and you'll be amazed at how helpful they can be. Oh of course there are some morons as you would expect in any culture, but the majority are very nice.

Keep your sense of humor as they love "taking the piss" out of anyone who is non-native. That means they'll find a way to poke fun at you. It's nothing personal it's just a national pastime ;)

I know you're going to love your stay here! It's an amazing country and there's so much to explore you'll never run out of things to do.

Please let me know how you get on as they say here. I'd love to hear about your experiences and adventures!

Tessa x

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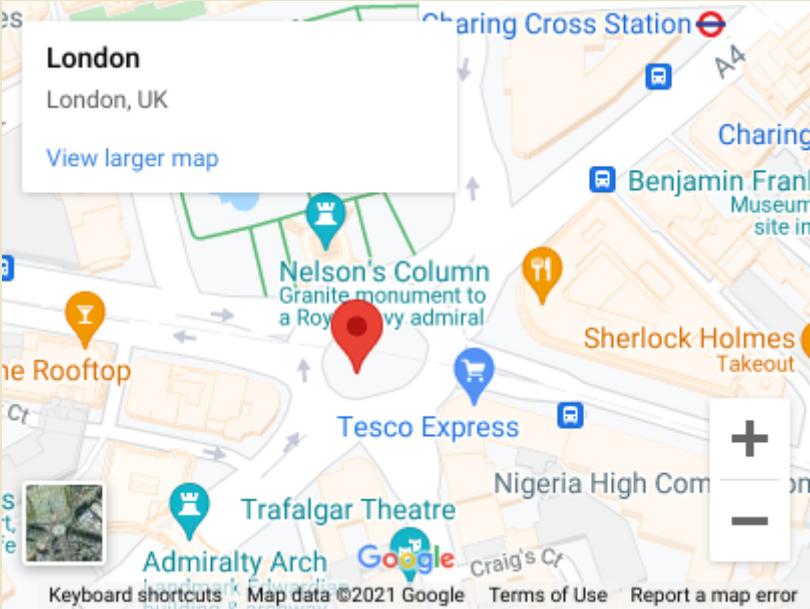
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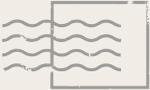
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