

Practical Information

Traveling to the United Kingdom – COVID Guidelines

During these uncertain times, foreign travel requirements and guidelines change regularly. Please be aware of the current restrictions and requirements to travel to and from the United Kingdom. Links provided below may assist you in understanding your obligations to ensure travel to and entrance into the United Kingdom:

[Entry Requirements into the United Kingdom](#)

[Mandatory Passenger Locator Form](#)

[Covid Test Provider Service in UK](#)

London Weather in October

London experiences defined seasons which affect temperatures and weather. October is a very pleasant month to visit London when the weather is mild. The average high temperature in October is 55°F (13°C), with an average low temperature at 48°F (9°C). When traveling to London, it is always wise to be prepared for the possibility of rain. We recommend dressing in layers and carrying rainwear or an umbrella.

What to Wear in London

Monday-Friday in Court: Proper decorum is mandatory at all times. We are the special guests of The Right Honourable Lord Chief Justice Sir John Thomas, and the President of the Supreme Court, Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury. When we attend court sessions, we sit where only barristers are normally permitted. Although we are not required to wear wigs and robes, we are required to be **dressed in conservative business attire**. Men should wear dark suits and neckties. Ladies should wear dark suits, jackets with either skirts or slacks, and blouses. Since we will be doing some walking, you should wear comfortable walking shoes during the day; however, sneakers are inappropriate.

Friday's Gala Event at the Houses of Parliament: This is our "formal" evening and you will want to plan accordingly. Ladies should wear cocktail attire and gentlemen should plan on a suit and tie. Black tie is not required. *Ladies: please note that the floors in the Houses of Parliament can be smooth and uneven. You may want to take this into consideration when selecting your heels for the evening.*

Customs and Immigration

Before you arrive...

Make sure you have the appropriate identification and the correct visa before you get here:

Passports

Your passport must be valid for the duration of your stay in the UK. U.S. citizens may not leave the country if their passport is due to expire within the next six months.

Visas

As a short-term business visitor and U.S. citizen, most participants of *A Week in Legal London* will not need a UK visa. If you are unsure of the visa requirements for your circumstances, please visit the UK Visa website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.

The U.S. State Department encourages all U.S. citizens traveling abroad to register. Please visit the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program website at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. Registrations will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

The **U.S. Embassy** in the United Kingdom is located at 24 Grosvenor Square, W1A 1AE, London (tel. [44] (0)20 7499-9000). The U.S. also maintains Consulate Generals in Belfast, Northern Ireland and Edinburgh, Scotland.

Medical & Health Information

If you have special medical needs, or in case you become unwell or require medical assistance during your trip, here is some advice and information for before you leave and during your stay.

Medical Insurance

You are strongly advised to take out adequate insurance before travelling to Britain. Your travel agent will be able to suggest a suitable policy.

Bringing Medicine into the UK

If you want to bring medicine into the UK, first check that it is licensed for use. Always carry medicines in a correctly-labeled container as issued by the pharmacist. Otherwise, bring a letter from your doctor or a personal health record card giving details of the drug prescribed, in case it is queried by customs or you require additional supplies. Remember that some medicines available over-the-counter in other countries may be controlled in Britain, and vice versa.

Pharmacies & Chemists

In Britain you can obtain prescription, and over-the-counter (non-prescription), medications as well as expert medical advice at pharmacies – often called chemists. We recommend you carry a letter from your doctor stating your prescription and dosage if you are taking any medication.

Pharmacy Opening Hours

Pharmacies are usually open from 09:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays and limited availability on Sundays. However, in London you will find a number of pharmacies open late during the week and on the weekend. Check with the Concierge Desk for the closest pharmacies to the Brown's Hotel.

E-mail: conciierge.browns@roccofortehotels.com | phone: +44 (0)207 518 4035

Food & Water

The level of food hygiene in Britain is very high, so you should simply observe the normal precautions when consuming food products, i.e. ensure it is thoroughly cooked, or that it is within the expiration date. The standard of water cleanliness is also very high, and in general kitchen water supplies, tap water in restaurants and ice cubes are safe drinking water. You can find bottled water in most shops and supermarkets.

Emergency Treatment

If you become ill while visiting Britain, you are eligible for free emergency treatment in the Accident and Emergency departments of National Health Service hospitals. However, if you are admitted to hospital as an in-patient, even from the accident and emergency department, or referred to an out-patient clinic, you will be asked to pay unless:

- You are in receipt of a UK state retirement pension.
- You are a national or resident of the European Economic Area.
- You are a refugee or stateless person living in the European Economic Area or the dependent or survivor of such a person, regardless of your own nationality.
- You are a national or resident of countries which have reciprocal health care agreements with the UK. The following countries have such agreements in place: Bulgaria, Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Malta, New Zealand, Russia, former Soviet Union states - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, former Yugoslavia - Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and residents of Anguilla,

Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Channel Islands, Falkland Islands, Isle of Man, Montserrat, Poland, Romania, St Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands.

Exemption from charges applies only to treatment needed during the visit. You are strongly advised to take out adequate insurance before travelling to Britain. Your travel agent will be able to suggest a suitable policy.

Obtaining Treatment

If you are unwell during your visit to Britain, first consult a pharmacist – also known as chemists. They will advise on treatments available over-the-counter (for example: available without a doctor's prescription) and can recommend local medical practices if needed.

Keep a written record with you at all times of any medical condition affecting you and the generic names (not just the trade names) of any medication you are taking.

Currency & exchanging money

Britain's unit of currency is the Great British Pound (sterling) – GBP. The symbol for the pound sterling is £. Queen Elizabeth II's image has been on British currency so long that there was some confusion as to whether or not the money was still valid after her death. A statement from the Bank of England has clarified that currency with the Queen's image will continue to be legal tender in the United Kingdom.

The British Monetary System

British money is based on the decimal system – there are one hundred pence to each pound. Coins have the values of 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. Notes have the values of £5, £10, £20 and £50.

Bringing Money to the UK

Please note that from 15 June 2007, if you are travelling to or from a country outside the European Union (EU), you will need to declare any sums of cash of 10,000 Euro or more (or the equivalent in another currency) to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Changing Money & Exchange Rates

Foreign currency can easily be exchanged at banks, post offices, some hotels and Bureau de Change kiosks, which are found at international airports and most city centers. To see today's exchange rate visit the Financial Times currencies website at <http://markets.ft.com/research/Markets/Currencies>.

Bank Opening Hours

Banks are generally open from 09:30 to 16:30 Monday to Friday. However, opening hours can differ considerably from branch to branch. All banks are closed on public holidays and some banks in Scotland close for an hour at lunchtime. (Please note that there are no public holidays during our Week in Legal London.) Many banks have 24-hour banking lobbies where you can access a range of services via machines. Visitors from overseas should check with their own bank whether they will be able to gain access to these facilities.

Obtaining Money When Banks are Closed

Some banks are open on Saturdays and a few are open for a few hours on Sundays. If you need British currency when the banks are closed, you can obtain it at larger high-street travel agents, in exchange offices in large department stores, at counter desks in larger hotels or at one of the many independent Bureau de Change. Regulations require all Bureau de Change to clearly display all exchange rates and full details of any fees and rates of commission.

ATMs (cash machines)

You'll find Automated Teller Machines (ATM), or cash machines, as the Brits often call them, at most banks, high streets and shopping centers. You can use international credit cards, debit cards and bank cards at ATMs providing they have a four-digit PIN encoded. As a general rule, any cash machine that displays the Visa

badge can be used by Plus cardholders and those displaying the MasterCard badge can be used by Cirrus cardholders.

Credit Cards

All credit cards that bear the Visa, MasterCard or American Express logo are widely accepted in Britain. If your card does not bear one of these logos, you should ask the retailer in advance if you can use it, or check if your card's logo is displayed at the payment area. You should be aware that retailers can charge more for goods and services bought by credit card, but they must display a clear indication if any price increase applies.

Safety and Security

By international standards, Britain is a safe country with low rates of street crime and violence. Use this general guide to help you maximize your personal safety during your trip. Most of these tips are common sense, and you probably practice them in your own country, but they can make a real difference.

Emergency situations

In an emergency that requires ambulance, police or fire services dial **999** from any telephone. In the case of a non-emergency crime you should contact your local police station.

Insurance

We strongly advise that you take out adequate insurance before you leave to cover you for any health and medical issues, and also for theft or damage to your belongings.

Tips to help you stay safe

Using public transport & taxis

- Avoid waiting alone at bus stops and on train platforms.
- On a double-decker bus, sit downstairs where the driver can see you.
- Avoid sitting in an empty carriage on trains and the Underground.
- Check the time of the last train, bus or tube back to your accommodation.
- Walking near railway lines can be very dangerous; never touch them.
- Always use a licensed taxi – check the back of the taxi to ensure it carries an official license plate.
- Minicabs that stop in the street may be cheaper, but they are not as safe as those you arrange over the phone.
- If you need immediate assistance when travelling on a bus or train you can call the British Transport Police free on 0800 40 50 40.

Be safe on the streets

- Stay on the pavement walking towards oncoming traffic.
- Look both ways when you cross the street – remember cars drive on the left in Britain.
- Never carry large amounts of money with you, but always make sure you have enough for a phone call and a bus or taxi home.
- Keep your handbag and belongings close to your body and wear them in front of you.
- Avoid using cash machines at night or in isolated places, and always be aware of people around you.
- Try not to display expensive items like laptops, mobile phones and jewelry.
- Avoid confrontation – if you are harassed, try to remove yourself from the situation.
- If you think you are being followed, find the nearest public place and ask for assistance.

At your accommodation

- Avoid leaving valuables in your room.
- Make sure your room door is locked when you leave.
- All paid-for accommodation has to have a working smoke detector and alarm.

- Make sure you turn off all gas and electrical appliances (except the refrigerator) when you go out.
- When you arrive at your accommodation, familiarize yourself with the fire exits, assembly points and the location of fire extinguishers.
- Make sure your accommodation provider supplies you with information about the procedures for emergency evacuation.

Tippling & Service Charges

Tippling is not always appropriate in the UK. If you feel the service was good and you want to show your appreciation, here is a guide to customary practice:

Hotels

Most hotel bills include a service charge, usually 10-12%. Where a service charge is not included in a hotel restaurant, it is customary to give 10-15% of the restaurant bill. For rooms, you can leave an optional amount to room staff.

Restaurants

Many restaurant bills include a service charge; make sure you check the bill to avoid tipping twice. Where a service charge is not included, it is customary to leave a tip of 10-15% of the bill. Some restaurants now include a suggested tip in the bill total.

Taxis

10-15% of the fare

Porterage

£1-2, depending on number and size of bags

VAT Exemption

VAT (Value-Added Tax) is a sales tax of 20% that is charged on virtually all goods sold in Britain. VAT is nearly always included in the advertised or marked price, although some retailers (notably stationers and electrical goods shops) charge it separately. American visitors to Britain who stay no longer than three months may claim back VAT. If you plan to do this, make sure you take your passport with you when shopping. You must complete a form in the store when you buy the goods and then give a copy to Customs officials when you leave Britain. The tax refund may be returned to you by check or attributed to your credit card, but then a service charge will usually be deducted. Most stores have a minimum purchase for exemption, often £50 or £75. If you arrange to have your goods shipped directly home from the store, VAT should be deducted before you pay.

Postal Services

Besides main post offices that offer all services, London has many sub-post offices, which often double as newsstands. Post offices are usually open from 9:00 am – 5:30 pm Monday through Friday and until 12:30 pm on Saturday. Mailboxes in all shapes and sizes – but always painted red – are found throughout the City.

Adaptors and Converter Plugs for Electrical Appliances

The electrical supply in London is 240V AC and plugs have three square pins. An adapter plug and converter are needed for appliances with any other formats. Be sure to bring an adapter plug and converter with you. Most hotels have two-pronged, European-style sockets for shavers in the bathroom.

Public Transportation

The **Underground** system, or subway, known as the “Tube” to Londoners, has 273 stations, each clearly marked with the Underground Logo (shown at the right). Tube trains run every day, except Christmas, from about 5:30 am until just after midnight, but a few lines or sections of lines provide a more irregular service. Fewer trains run on Sundays. It can occasionally be unpleasant traveling on the Tube late at night. However, The Tube is, by far, the quickest way to travel around London. Services can be prone to delays and trains are often crowded. Changing lines may involve a long-ish walk at some stations. London is so large that some sights are a long way, or even a bus journey, from any Underground station.



Public transportation in London is expensive compared with that of many other cities in Europe. Short trips are relatively more expensive than longer journeys. It is rarely worthwhile taking the Tube to travel just one stop. By far, the most economical fares can be accessed using a Travelcard or Oyster card. This is the cheapest way to pay for single journey on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and National Rail services in London. An Oyster card is a smartcard that you can add to (top-up) or “pay as you go” on a credit card. For more information about the Oyster Card, visit www.tfl.gov.uk/oyster.

London Buses

One of London’s most recognizable symbols is the old-fashioned red double-decker bus, but it is a less common sight today than it once was. As a result of deregulation and privatization of the city’s bus system, there are now many smaller modern buses, some single-decker and some not even red, carry passengers on London’s streets. If you are able to get a seat, a bus journey is an undemanding and enjoyable way of seeing London. If you are in a hurry, however, it can be frustrating. Each bus stop in central London has a list of main destinations showing the bus routes. Make sure you catch a bus going in the right direction; if in doubt, check with the bus conductor or driver.

Getting a Taxi

London’s well-known black cabs are almost as much of an institution as its red buses. But they, too, are being modernized, and you may well see blue, green, red or even white cabs, with some carrying advertising. Black-cab drivers have to take a stringent test on their knowledge of London’s streets and its quickest traffic routes before they are awarded a license. Contrary to popular opinion, they are also among London’s safest drivers, if only because they are forbidden to drive a cab with damaged bodywork. Look for the sign on the cab which reads “For Hire” which will be lit whenever the cab is free. All licensed cabs have meters that will start ticket at running at £2.60 as soon as the driver accepts your request. The fare is calculated by time of day, distance travelled and taxi speed. Surcharges are then added for piece of luggage and extra passengers. Fares should always be on display.

Exploring on Foot

Once you get used to traffic driving on the left, London can be safely explored on foot. **Remember to take care when crossing the street.** There are two types of pedestrian crossings in London: striped zebra crossings marked by beans and push-button crossings at traffic lights. Traffic should stop for you if you are waiting at a zebra crossing, but at push-button crossings, cars will not stop until the green man lights up. Watch for instructions written on the pavement; these tell you from which direction you can expect the traffic to come.

Driving a Car in London

Most visitors are better off not driving in central London. Traffic moves at an average speed of about 11 mph during the rush hour, and parking is hard to find. If you decide to drive while in Great Britain, **remember you must drive on the left.** Parking regulations are strictly enforced. If you park illegally or allow a meter to run

out, you may find your car has been “clamped” with a large notice slapped across your windshield informing you at which Payment Centre you need to visit to get your car released (after paying a hefty fine). Every driver should read the UK Highway Code manual (available in book shops) and familiarize themselves with London’s traffic signs.

Public Pay Phones

You'll find public telephone boxes all over London. In many phone booths, you can surf the internet and send emails and text messages, as well as making telephone calls.

Mobile Phones

Most dual and tri band mobile phones with GSM 900 or 1800 will work in Britain. Before you leave for *A Week in Legal London*, check with your mobile provider that the roaming function is activated on your phone. Many cell phone companies in London can sell you an inexpensive “pay-as-you-go” cell phone with a London phone number. You can add value to your phone by “topping-up” at newsstands and shops throughout the City.

Helpful Websites:

British Tourist Authority | www.visitbritain.com

UK Travel Guides | www.ukguide.org, www.londontown.com and www.visitlondon.com

Heathrow Express Train | www.heathrowexpress.com

Gatwick Express Train | www.gatwickexpress.com

London Public Transportation | www.tfl.gov.uk

National Rail | www.nationalrail.co.uk