

ICMP

The Institute
of Contemporary
Music Performance

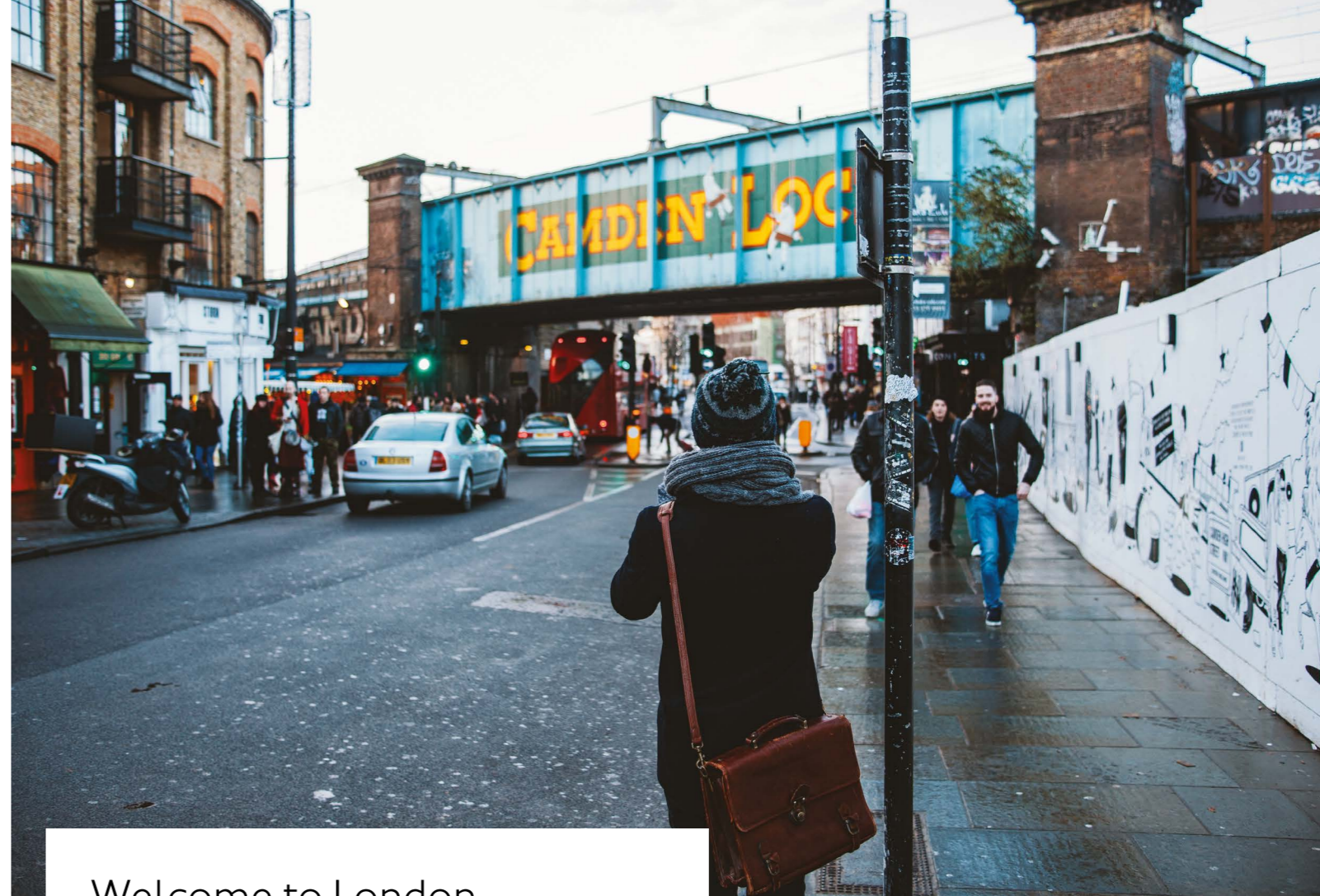


**LONDON
CITY GUIDE**

icmp.ac.uk

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Welcome to London Heritage and Culture

With a history stretching back over two millennia, from its founding by the Romans as Londinium in AD 43, the UK capital has survived plagues, fires and wars. It evolved from a bustling medieval trading hub to the heart of the British Empire, influencing global culture, finance, and politics.

London is renowned as the world's music capital, offering an unrivalled music scene where genres from grime to jazz thrive in historic venues and cutting-edge spaces. It's a place where history meets the contemporary, from the iconic **Tower of London** and **St. Paul's Cathedral** to **Canary Wharf** and **The Shard**.

Its cultural diversity, reflected in its food, fashion, music and festivals, invites students to immerse themselves in a global metropolis while pursuing their academic dreams. This city isn't just a place to study; it's an epicentre for discovery and inspiration, full of endless opportunities.

Each neighbourhood has unique charm and attractions. For example, **Camden** is synonymous with music and markets, where the eclectic mix of live venues like the **Electric Ballroom** and **Camden Market** offer great rewards – from memorable musical performances to vintage vinyl and international street food.

South of the River Thames, **Brixton** presents a vibrant blend of Afro-Caribbean culture, reflected in its lively

Brixton Village Market and the famed **O2 Brixton Academy**. Meanwhile, **Shoreditch**, the heart of **London's East End**, is a canvas for street artists and a playground for foodies and night owls with its array of bars and restaurants – it's also a great spot for shopping with **Boxpark Shoreditch's** shipping container pop-ups. These neighbourhoods are just the tip of the iceberg and there is so much to explore and experience in the city's suburbs too.

Beyond music and markets, London is home to world-leading universities and research institutions, nestled alongside cultural hubs like the **British Museum** and the **Tate Modern**, which offer free access to priceless works of art and historical artefacts. This educational ecosystem is supported by London's role as a tech and financial hub, with areas like **Canary Wharf** at the forefront of industry and innovation.

For those seeking tranquillity amidst the urban buzz, green spaces such as **Hyde Park**, the **Royal Botanic Gardens**, **Kew** and **Hampstead Heath** offer peaceful retreats.

In London, every street corner tells a story, every neighbourhood offers a new experience, and the city's blend of history, culture, and modernity creates an unrivalled environment for student life.

More information about London's [top attractions](#) and [music spots](#) can be found on [page 7](#).

Getting Around The City

London's transport network is operated by Transport for London (TfL) and is one of the largest travel systems in the world. You can expect to spend anywhere between £10-£70 on weekly commutes, with two thirds of Londoners paying £20 or more.

Oyster Card

The first thing you need to do is register with (TfL) and buy a **Student Oyster Card**. You can use this to access a 30% discount on Travelcards – a service that is perfect for students commuting to and from the same locations most days of the week.

National Railcard

Pairing a **National Railcard** with an Oyster Card gives you an additional discount on off-peak fares which is worthwhile for substantial long-term savings while travelling around the city. The National Railcard also offers great reductions on national train fares, making it essential if you often travel home for weekends or visit friends at other universities.

Visit tfl.gov.uk for information about commuting in London and to purchase **Student Oyster Cards** and **Travelcards**. Visit trainline.com to order a **National Railcard**.

We've listed some essential services for effectively navigating the city, with additional tips for reducing costs. You can also use **TfL's route planner** to work out how much your journey will cost.

Essential Apps

If you want to navigate the city with ease, make sure you download the **TfL Go** app. It provides live arrival and departure times for trains and buses all over London and reports any disruptions to services. We also recommend downloading the **CityMapper** app on your smart phones, and choose London as your city. The app will plan your route for you, giving you a few different options to choose from. This app also shows you the estimated price of your journey, which is another great money saving hack.

Night Tube

Going for a night out? The Night Tube is a late service provided by TfL, there are also lots of night buses available throughout the week. Always plan your journey back home before you leave the house!

Student Accommodation

For students, housing options include halls of residence, which offer a diverse blend of communal living spaces suitable for newcomers to city life, especially those studying at ICMP and other universities.

Private rentals can be a more flexible and affordable option, but might require more consideration and management. This could be less suitable for those living away from home for the first time.

Halls of Residence

Most providers offer an variety of room options for different needs including single room's with shared facilities, en-suite rooms or studio spaces with private kitchenettes.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive billing• Communal living areas• Extra facilities such as gyms• Maintenance and security services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tend to be costlier than private rentals• Might involve longer commutes

Private Rentals

Always work with letting agents endorsed by ICMP or your university and use deposit protection. Agents are forbidden from charging for admin or references.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick your housemates• Flexible about where you live• Available garden/driveway• Options vary from houses to studios• Bills might be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer rental agreements• Bigger deposits• You handle the admin• Guarantor usually needed

Guarantors are often needed for student rentals. Visit the **Citizens Advice** website for more information.



Essential Resources & Support

Spotahome

This is a convenient online rental platform where you can find and book medium to long-term housing. The service includes fraud protection, assistance with last-minute cancellations, and a promise to show real property images and videos. ICMP students are entitled to a 20% discount - find out more at one of our Accommodation Day events.

- For information about renting rights visit www.gov.uk/private-renting
- FAQs and guidance at england.shelter.org.uk
- Essential info about the deposit protection scheme depositprotection.com
- Top tips from **Save The Student** and their own [property viewing checklist](#)

Visit icmp.ac.uk/accommodation for a dedicated **accommodation guide** and find out which halls of residence are popular with ICMP students.

Rightmove.co.uk/students

This useful accommodation finder lets you search for specialist university accommodation, including more traditional student housing, such as halls of residence and private halls.

Eating Out On A Budget

Budget Friendly Eateries

1. **Beigel Bake on Brick Lane** – Famous for its 24-hour service and deliciously affordable salt beef bagels, this is a must-visit for a quick, satisfying bite at any hour.
2. **Flat Iron Square in Southwark** – this buzzing food market offers a variety of dishes from around the world. It's a great place to explore different cuisines at wallet-friendly prices.
3. **Herman ze German** – With several locations across London, Herman ze German serves up authentic German sausages and snacks. It's perfect for a hearty meal that won't leave you scrimping.
4. **The Cheese Bar in Camden** – For cheese enthusiasts, this spot offers a selection of dishes where cheese is the star, at reasonable prices. Their toasties are legendary.
5. **Franco Manca** – Renowned for its sourdough pizza that uses an 18th-century starter from Naples, Franco Manca offers incredible value for money. With several locations around London, it's a reliable choice for delicious budget-friendly meals.

Money-Saving Hacks

Exploring London's culinary scene on a budget is entirely possible with a bit of planning and some insider knowledge. Whether you're craving a late-night snack, a casual brunch, or a hearty dinner, London has an abundance of options to satisfy your appetite without emptying your wallet.

- **Student Discounts** – Always ask if there are student discounts available. Many places offer a percentage off the bill upon showing a valid student ID.
- **Lunch Offers** – Dining out during lunchtime can often be cheaper than dinner. Look for lunch specials, which are common in many restaurants.
- **Happy Hours and Special Deals** – Keep an eye out for happy hours and special deals. Many restaurants and cafés offer early bird specials or set menu deals that are great value.
- **Loyalty Programs** – Sign up for loyalty programs at places you frequent. Collecting points can lead to free meals or drinks.
- **Food Markets and Street Food** – London's food markets and street food stalls are a goldmine for delicious, affordable food. Markets like Borough Market, though on the pricier side, also have budget-friendly options if you look around.

- **Supermarket Reduced Sections** – Major supermarkets will often reduce the price of food that's nearly expired. Sourcing items from this section can be a great way to save money on lunch and dinner. Check to see if any of the ingredients you need can be bought at a reduced cost.
- **BYOB Restaurants** – Look for places that allow you to bring your own bottle (BYOB). This can significantly lower the cost of dining out, as drinks can add a considerable amount to the bill.
- **Use Apps** – There are several apps designed to help you find the best deals in your area, including discounts and offers specific to restaurants. Food waste apps like **Too Good To Go** and **Karma**, are also great for getting cheap ingredients and tasty meals that would otherwise go to landfill.



Local Area Kilburn + Queen's Park Campuses

There are several great eateries offering a variety of different cuisines along Kilburn High road and around Queen's Park. Everything from Turkish to Brazilian can be found if you know where to look.

- **Kaipiras by Barraco** is a Brazilian restaurant that offers authentic dishes like feijoada, rice and beans, and exotic fruit shakes. On Fridays and Saturday evenings, live bossa nova music adds to the ambiance.
- **Ariana II** offers tasty Afghan food with a BYOB policy, making it a very affordable option.
- **Meaty Buns** is a great option for a quick burger and chips in-between classes.
- **Small And Beautiful** is less than a 2 minute walk from the Kilburn campus and has a great selection of affordable Italian food.
- **The Black Lion** pub has excellent bites and a separate restaurant, serving delicious fusion food inspired by cuisines found in the local area.
- Head over to **Spicy Basil** for excellent Thai food – you won't regret it!

Leisure & Attractions

1. Museums and Galleries

From the world-renowned **British Museum**, showcasing artefacts like the Rosetta Stone, to the **Tate Modern**, a powerhouse of contemporary art, there's something for everyone. Don't miss the **Natural History Museum** for a walk through earth's history, and the **Victoria and Albert Museum** for its comprehensive collection of decorative arts.

The British Library is a cultural hub, housing over 170 million items. Check out the Magna Carta, Shakespeare's folios, and the Beatles' manuscripts. The library also hosts exhibitions, talks, and music performances, making it a dynamic place for intellectual and cultural enrichment.

2. Parks

The city's parks are its lungs, offering sprawling green spaces perfect for picnics, sports, or a quiet read under a tree. **Hyde Park**, one of the largest, is famous for its Speaker's Corner and Serpentine Lake. **Regent's Park** houses the London Zoo and an open-air theatre. For stunning skyline views, head to **Greenwich Park** or **Primrose Hill**.

Hampstead Heath offers a taste of countryside and natural ponds that you can swim in all year round.

3. Pubs

A quintessential part of British culture, London's 3,500 pubs range from historic inns to modern gastropubs. **The George Inn**, London's oldest pub, offers a glimpse into the past with its original timber framing. Camden's **The Hawley Arms**, favoured by locals and celebrities alike, is perfect for those seeking a vibrant atmosphere. **The Pride of Spitalfields** off of Brick Lane does a well-priced pint and has an authentic East-end vibe.

Local to our campuses there is **The Black Lion**, **The North London Tavern** and **Alice House**.

4. The Riverside

London's Thames River is lined with walkways, eateries, and historic sites. Take a leisurely stroll along the **South Bank** to enjoy street performers, the **Tate Modern**, and the **Hayward Gallery** and great places to eat and drink. The Riverside also includes the **Globe Theatre**, where you can catch a Shakespeare play in an authentic setting, and the historic **HMS Belfast**.

5. Cultural Festivals and Events

London's calendar is packed with cultural festivals and events throughout the year, from the **Notting Hill Carnival**, one of the world's largest street festivals, to the **Chinese New Year** celebrations in Chinatown.

The capital hosts several day festivals in the summer months too, such as **Wireless** in Finsbury Park, **All Points East** in Victoria Park and **Cross The Tracks** in Brockwell Park, plus many more!

6. East London

East London is the heart of the city's alternative scene, known for its street art, vintage markets, and indie cafés. Explore the vibrant streets of **Shoreditch** and **Brick Lane**, where art and fashion collide. Don't miss the **Columbia Road Flower Market** on Sundays and the eclectic **Old Spitalfields Market** for unique finds.

7. Soho

Soho, London's entertainment district, buzzes with theatres, jazz bars, unique eateries and queer clubs. It's the place to experience London's nightlife, from historic jazz club **Ronnie Scott's** to innovative dining at **Sketch**. Soho is also home to Chinatown, offering authentic Asian cuisine and vibrant street festivals.

8. Live Music

London's live music scene is as diverse as the city itself. Head to [page 9](#) for a list of 20 excellent venues to visit or get involved with.

9. Shopping

London's shopping scene is as diverse and dynamic as the city itself, catering to every taste and budget. **Oxford Street** is the bustling heart of London's retail, home to over 300 shops, including the flagship stores of British institutions like **Selfridges** and **John Lewis**. For luxury brands, head to **Liberty London** on Regent's Street, to **Bond Street** or the opulent **Harrods** in Knightsbridge. Those seeking unique and vintage finds should explore the markets of **Camden**, **Portobello Road**, and **Covent Garden**, where independent stalls sell everything from antique treasures to handmade crafts.

10. Historical Landmarks

Highlight the must-visit historical landmarks that tell the tales of London's rich past. **The Tower of London**, where Henry VIII sent Anne Boleyn to be beheaded, **Westminster Abbey**, and **St. Paul's Cathedral** are key sites that showcase British history and architecture.

From the fantastic music venues of Camden Town and the South Bank, to the nightlife of Soho and Hackney and the amazing food and shopping, there's always something exciting to experience in London.

ICMP operates in a city at the heart of the global music industry. Not only does coming here put you in pole position to get a head start in building your musical career, it's also an amazing place to live.

Head to [timeout.com](https://www.timeout.com) for up-to-date activities and [attractions](#) in London.



ICMP alumna Charlotte Campbell busking on the River Thames.

Music Venues, Hotspots & Opportunities

London is the epicentre of the UK's music industry, home to giants like Spotify and Google alongside major labels and music promoters. Beyond its role as a business hub, it's an incredible place to experience live music. We've put together a list of 20 must-visit venues, ranging from grand 20,000-capacity arenas to intimate indie spots, hand-picked by our tutors and students alike.

1. **Moth Club, Hackney** - Appreciated for its unique atmosphere and glittery ceiling.
2. **The Troubadour, Earls Court** - Historic venue, ranked highly with our students, known for its intimate gigs.
3. **The Lexington, Angel** - Great vibe and excellent sound.
4. **The Bedford, Balham** - Highlighted for its Shakespearean theatre vibe and memorable showcases.
5. **The Jamboree, Kings Cross** - Quirky interior hosting Jewish and Celtic folk/jazz events.
6. **The Vaults, Waterloo** - Known for impressive multidisciplinary spaces and supporting new artists.
7. **Brixton Academy, Brixton** - Iconic venue hosting big names, known for its energy and history.
8. **Bush Hall, Uxbridge** - An Edwardian ballroom with a real baby grand piano, known for hosting significant artists.
9. **Cafe Oto, Dalston** - Celebrated for experimental music and community projects.
10. **The Fiddler, Kilburn** - Intimate new talent spotlight only a short walk from ICMP's Kilburn campus!
11. **Servant Jazz Quarters, Dalston** - Known for close, personal performances and showcasing grassroots music.
12. **Earth (Evolutionary Arts Hackney), Hackney** - Inclusivity and innovative sound technology.
13. **KOKO, Camden** - Landmark venue that's recently undergone an extensive refurbishment.
14. **The Roundhouse, Camden** - Historic venue with a state-of-the-art setup, regularly booking incredible acts.
15. **The Union Chapel, Islington** - Tranquil venue known for its stunning acoustics.
16. **The 100 Club, Oxford Street** - Iconic venue with a rich musical history across genres.
17. **The Royal Albert Hall, Kensington** - Prestigious and historic with a unique architectural design.
18. **The O2 Arena, Greenwich** - One of the UK's most significant live music stadiums.
19. **Omeara, Borough** - A newer venue praised for its acoustics and diverse events.
20. **The Black Heart, Camden** - Vibrant rock, punk, and metal hub with a top-end sound system.



Open Mics & Jams

There is an abundance of open mics and jam nights throughout London, with many based in Camden. Our favourites for showcasing your music are **Spiritual Bar**, **The Green Note** and **The Dublin Castle**. For meeting incredible musicians and jamming the night away try **The Jago**, Hackney or **Troy Bar** in Hoxton. Beyond these notable spots, a vast majority of pubs across the capital regularly open their doors to showcase up-and-coming artists, making live-performance accessible to all.

Most venues will give artists the opportunity to play 2-3 songs, but it's best to come prepared with a set of 5 or 6 that you can play confidently so you can rotate your set across different venues.

For more open mic venues and tips, visit our dedicated blog article [here](#).

Busking

Busking is allowed in London and can be an excellent way to promote your sound, provided you adhere to certain guidelines. Before you set-up and play, it's essential to contact the area's local council to see if you need a busking licence, as requirements can vary and many councils set their own rules. These might include restrictions on noise levels, avoiding obstructing public highways and limitations on where and how long you can perform.

In certain areas, such as on private land like tube, bus, and railway stations, a licence is mandatory. Once obtained, the licence must be displayed during performances. The London Underground is a popular place to perform, with buskers broadcasting their music to a unique audience of around 3.5 million tube passengers every day. Transport for London host their own **London Underground Busking Scheme** which you can get involved with [here](#).

As for collecting money, buskers can accept voluntary donations if they hold a valid licence for the area they are performing in. Selling merchandise on the street requires a separate street trading licence, although giving away items like CDs is allowed.

For legalities visit: www.gov.uk

To find top spots visit: www.foundinmusic.com

CONTACT ICMP

Our Student Support teams remain on hand to assist with any questions you have throughout your time at ICMP.

Admissions

enquiries@icmp.ac.uk

020 3820 6432

Finance

finance@icmp.ac.uk

020 7604 2465

Disability and Wellbeing Team

studentwellbeing@icmp.ac.uk

Accommodation Queries

accommodation@icmp.ac.uk

