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Photograph by
Brian Lehmann,
SU London Alum

student life in london

Welcome to our guide to student life in London. You've got a wonderful chance to get out and live in one of the world's most exciting cities, and we are here to help you make the most of your semester. You'll find our best advice and recommendations for helping you find your feet in this section. We begin with information and advice on keeping yourself fit and well. Need a doctor or a dentist? You'll find the listings here, along with a short introduction to the NHS and NHS Direct.

Next we tell you how to find the household basics for setting up your flat: stationery supplies, toiletries, books, groceries and all the day to day essentials you'll need. If you are a vegetarian we'll let you know where to find London's many veggie restaurants and health food shops.

And keeping in mind that you've got to budget yourself to get to the end of the month, we've also got a section on living in London on a budget, because we know how expensive it is -- we live here! In this section, we give you the low down on everything from using mobiles and choosing calling plans, buying clothing, purchasing theatre tickets, going to the pub and buying food .

Photograph by
Krysti Sabins,
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health and wellness

Just a word before we begin.

SU London provides the following information as a courtesy to all interested parties. Consultations between patient and doctor, dentist, lawyer or counselor are considered private, and **payment for all treatment and services contracted is the sole responsibility of the student.** We hold information on doctors and health services in addition to the ones listed here. If you stop by Student Life in SR109, we can advise you further just as long as you remember that we are providing this information as a *courtesy*. It is up to you to use your best judgment when making the final decision!

As an American student studying here for a single semester, you are not eligible for treatment under the National Health Service (NHS). However, you can get free advice on symptoms from NHS Direct (see next page under Good Advice).

Walk-in Centres

NHS Walk-in Centres give you fast access to health advice and treatment. They are open to

anyone on a drop-in basis and provide access to a range of NHS services. Experienced NHS nurses are available to treat a range of minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, and infections, as well as minor injuries like strains, sprains and cuts. The Walk-In Centres provide information, such as opening times, contact numbers etc. for all other local health services, including pharmacies, dental services and out-of-hours GP services. NHS Walk-in Centres do charge patients who are not eligible for care under the NHS.

The nearest NHS Walk-In Centre to Faraday House is *The Soho NHS Walk-In Centre*, 1 Frith Street, W1D 3HZ. It is just South of Soho Square.

- Tel: (020) 7534 6500
- Opening hours, Monday to Friday: 8:00am to 8:00pm
- Opening house, weekends and Bank Holidays: 10:00am to 8:00pm

To find other NHS Walk-In Centres, please check their website: www.nhs.uk.

There are also an increasing number of private walk-in medical centres in London, the largest being **Medicentre** (www.medicentre.co.uk), with

branches at all the main railway stations and also in Oxford Street Plaza. They offer a range of services and an initial consultation with a doctor will cost £65. Whilst they may be convenient, we strongly recommend that if you are ill, you consult one of the doctors recommended by SU London.

Doctors

Walk-in Centres are not intended to take the place of local GP or hospital services and you may need to have a routine or emergency treatment during the course of the semester. As a non-UK resident you will have to see a doctor privately. Generally, if you call early, you will be able to see someone on the same day.

Freedom Health (www.freedomhealth.co.uk) offers a preferential rate to SU London students and is conveniently located on 60 Harley Street, W1G 7HA. You can expect to pay approximately £85 for a consultation and they accept payment by credit card. Not only do they have a permanent staff of general practitioners but if you need tests or referrals, these can be done quickly and easily and you'll see some of London's top consultants. They are open from Monday through Saturday and you can call for an appointment on 020 7637 1600. Remember to get a receipt, as you may be able to make a claim from your health insurance in the US. And always have details of your health insurance with you.

If you would like details of other doctors or medical services, please ask a member of the Student Life team.

Chemists

Chemists (pharmacists) dispense prescriptions and offer advice on minor ailments. The largest dispensing chemist in London is **Boots** (www.boots.com), with branches all over the city. In emergencies, chemists may be able to dispense medications without a prescription.

Search for your nearest chemist on the **NHS website** (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) or call NHS Direct (0845 4647). The nearest pharmacies to Faraday House are:

Boots, 129-133 Kingsway, WC2B 6PP
Tel: 020 7242 8897
Superdrug, 18 High Holborn, WC1V 6BZ
Tel: 020 7404 3684
Holborn Pharmacy, 88 Southampton Row,
WC1B 4BB
Tel: 020 7405 2825
Clockwork Pharmacy, 150 Southampton Row,
WC1B 5AN
Tel: 020 7837 7143

NHS Hospitals with Emergency Departments

If you require emergency healthcare, you can go straight to an Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department at a hospital, the equivalent of an ER in the States. All outpatient treatment is free but if you are admitted as a patient, your treatment will be chargeable.

The hospital closest to Faraday House is **University College Hospital (UCLH)** (www.uclh.nhs.uk) at 235 Euston Road, NW1 2BU.

Moorfields Eye Hospital

(www.moorfields.nhs.uk/Home) also has an outpatient department, so if you find yourself with an eye infection or condition that needs the attention of an expert; you will be treated there for free IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ONLY. As in all NHS hospitals, outpatients are seen according to the severity of their condition so be prepared to wait. Moorfields is on 162 City Road, EC1V 2PD.

Not all hospitals have A&E departments. You can search for your nearest A&E on the **NHS website** (www.nhs.uk).

Ambulance Services

To contact ambulance services by telephone, dial **999**. The operator will ask you to select the service you require, police, fire or ambulance.

Private Urgent Medical Care

If you urgently need to see a doctor outside office hours and really don't want to wait at the A&E Room of an NHS hospital, there is a private hospital, the **Princess Grace Hospital** (www.theprincessgracehospital.com) in Marylebone which has an **Urgent Care Centre** (www.urgentcarecentre.co.uk) which is open 365 days a year from 8am – 10pm. A consultation with a doctor starts at £100 but if you have good insurance and don't want to wait, this is a good option. The Princess Grace Hospital is at 42-52 Nottingham Place, W1U 5NY.

Good Advice:

If you are unsure whether you need to see a doctor or not or want one on one advice from a healthcare professional to decide if you need to take action then phone **NHS Direct** on 0845 4647. This is a free 24-hour a day advisory service staffed by NHS nurses and other health care professionals who provide advice and information. The NHS Direct website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk is also excellent, and can be a good place to start if you are unsure whether to call a doctor or not.

Dentists

Bloomsbury Dental Practice, 7 Bury Place,
WC1A 2LA. Tel: (020) 7916 8000,
www.bloomsburydental.co.uk

Conduit Dental Centre, 41 Lambs Conduit Street,
WC1N 3NG. Tel: (020) 7405 4030
www.execudent.co.uk

Barts and The London Dental Hospital,
Whitechapel, E1 1BB. Tel: (020) 7377-7000.
www.bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk/our-services/dental-hospital

The Dental Emergency Clinic at Barts and The London Dental Hospital can see and treat a limited number of emergency patients each day on a walk-in basis. There is no charge for treatment provided. However, they cannot guarantee that everyone turning up at the clinic will be accepted for treatment. In an emergency, patients can call the **Emergency Dental Service** on Tel: 020 7377 7151 to speak to a dentist for free advice and help finding emergency treatment. Normal opening hours are Monday to Friday (except bank holidays) 8:30am to 4:00pm.

You can access emergency dental services through NHS Direct as well and for a listing of 24 hour dentists go to:
www.24hour-emergencydentist.co.uk.

Helplines and Clinics

Alcoholics Anonymous
Visit the AA website to find meetings in the UK and other general information about AA.
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk. Alternatively you can call the national help line on 0845 769 7555 or email help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Drug Arrest
Release (<http://release.org.uk>) is an organization which provides advice to drug users, their families and friends. Their advice is free, professional, non-judgmental and confidential. Call their helpline on 0845 4500 215 (open 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm, Monday-Friday) ask@release.org.uk

National Drugs Helpline
(Known as “Talk to Frank about Drugs”)
The National Drugs Helpline is a 24-hour, seven-days a week, free and confidential telephone and email service that offers advice and information for those who are concerned, or have questions, about drugs. Tel: 0800 776600
www.talktofrank.com

Eating Disorders Helpline
Here you will find information and help on all aspects of eating disorders including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating Disorder and related eating disorders: www.b-eat.co.uk.
Tel: 0845 634 1414. Phone lines are open from 10:30am – 8:30pm Monday to Friday, 1pm – 4:30pm on Saturday, and are closed on Sunday.

London Allergy Clinic
Tel: (020) 7637 9711. The London Allergy Clinic is able to administer allergy shots but before your first treatment you will be required to have a mini consultation which will cost £50. Any shots of further treatments will cost £45. Please note that in order for then to administer treatment it will be imperative that you follow the guidelines provided below:

- Bring your medication with you in the original containers.
- Bring a prescription from your physician in the United States.
- Bring a reference letter from your physician and a copy of your medical file, or at least the case notes pertaining to your allergy medication.

The Samaritans
The Samaritans provides confidential support 27/7 to those experiencing despair, distress or suicidal feelings. Call the 24 hour Helpline: 08457 909090. www.samaritans.org

The Rape Crisis group
The Rape Crisis charity provides an on-line resource for victims of sexual violence. Their freephone helpline is 0808 802 999 and lines are open from 12noon - 2:30pm/7pm – 9:30 every day. Go to www.rapecrisis.org.uk for details of Rape Crisis Centres and a full listing of resources and advice.

London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard
The London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard provides information, support and referral service for lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender people and anyone who needs to consider issues around their sexuality.
Their helpline is 0300 330 0630 and operates from 10am to 11pm, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. www.llgs.org.uk

Please remember that the Faraday Pride Coordinator Gary Tushaw is an invaluable resource, and you can contact him through the Student Life office.

Sexual Health Matters

Two important facts to know: The morning after pill is available in the UK, and abortion is legal. Please contact one of the clinics or advisory services below for more details.

The Sexual Health Line: 0800 567 123 (open 24 hours) is a free and confidential telephone service with advice about HIV, AIDS, sexual health, sexually transmitted infections, local services, clinics and support services.

The Jefferiss Wing Centre for Sexual Health is a walk-in sexual health clinic located at St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington, W2 1NY, accessible from Winsland Street, off Praed Street. This is a free, confidential service and no appointment is necessary. You can, however, send a text message from your mobile phone to reserve a slot by texting "slot" to 07786 202545. For more information Tel: (020) 7886 1225 or visit: www.imperial.nhs.uk/thejefferisswing.

Pregnancy Advice

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) provides counseling for unplanned pregnancy and abortion treatment, emergency contraception (such as the 'morning after pill') and free pregnancy testing. Tel: 08457 304030 www.bpas.org



Photograph by ,
Marklin Mello
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setting up your flat

Household Goods

If you're looking for basic stuff for your flat, Argos is an excellent place to shop for household goods. You'll find an Argos store on 80-110 New Oxford Street, just east of Tottenham Court Road Station. There's also a location in Holborn on 5 Gray's Inn Road, just north of Chancery Lane Station. Bhs (British Home Stores) has a very good range of inexpensive household items such as kitchen utensils, towels, sheets and pillows etc. It's similar to Marks & Spencer but a little bit cheaper. The nearest branch is on Oxford Street just west of Oxford Circus.

If you prefer to get your household goods from a department store, John Lewis on Oxford Street should be your first stop. It has a reputation for being "never knowingly undersold" so if you find the same product cheaper elsewhere, they promise to refund the difference. All the major department stores, such as Debenhams, House of Fraser, Marks & Spencer and Selfridges are on Oxford Street, so you'll be spoilt for choice. Both House of Fraser and Debenhams often have great sales and special offers.

And should you want to browse for some cheap and familiar household items; the closest IKEAs to London are in Wembley and Edmonton. IKEA Wembley is accessible via a 15-minute, well-marked walk from Neasden Station on the Jubilee line, or via a free shuttle bus from Stonebridge Park Station on the Bakerloo line. IKEA Edmonton is accessible via the 192 bus from Tottenham Hale Station on the Victoria line.

Stationery Supplies

The largest high street retailer of notebooks, folders, pens etc. is Ryman. Although it appears at first glance to be an office supply shop, they do excellent deals on all kinds of stationery products, particularly at the beginning of the school term and they give student discounts on production of a student identity card. The nearest Ryman store is on Southampton Row; about 2 minutes walk from Faraday House.

If your needs are more specialized – particularly for students on the Architecture or Design Programs - you're sure to find what you want in the London Graphic Centre. They're at 16-18 Shelton Street, in the heart of Covent Garden, and

they give student discounts on production of a student identity card. They carry a great range of art and graphic materials, along with more run of the mill stationery and computer supplies. And if you can't find what you're looking for, the friendly staff can point you in the right direction.

WH Smith is considered more a bookseller/newsagents, but they also carry quite a good range of stationery supplies. You'll find branches of WH Smiths all over town.

Toiletries

Boots has branches all over the city. Look out for their special offers and get their store card to take advantage of their loyalty cash back scheme! Besides toiletries, all Boots stores have a resident pharmacist, so that's the place to go if you need over the counter medicine or medical supplies. Superdrug is possibly even cheaper for toiletries, but carries fewer lines and not all stores have a pharmacy counter.

There are branches of both Superdrug and Boots located near Holborn tube station.

Most toiletries can also be found at larger supermarkets, such as Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Tesco.

Books

Looking for a good book? Try Waterstones, or if it is academic books you're looking for, go to Blackwell's in Charing Cross Road, SU London's book provider. They will be at Faraday House on Registration Day and thereafter they will keep Syracuse course books in stock in their Charing Cross store.

Charing Cross Road also has lots of second hand bookstores which are always good for a browse.

Food Basics

You'll need to get out and get supplies, so here are some tips for keeping yourself well fed. Firstly, it makes sense to get out to one of the larger supermarkets to stock up on essentials. The same items will cost more at your local 24 hour shop, so find your local supermarket as soon as possible. The largest and most popular British supermarkets are Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Somerfield, Waitrose, Budgens, and Lidl's. And although it isn't really a supermarket, Marks & Spencer has an excellent food section. It is more expensive than the average supermarket but it has the best ready-made meals around.

For those of you lucky enough to live in Central London, it may be tempting to visit the food halls at Selfridges and Harrods. While they are fun to browse and maybe pick up the occasional treat, we would not recommend you do your weekly grocery shop there!

But don't just stick to the big supermarkets for everything. London has a vast cultural diversity of food. There are small markets throughout the city that cater to every national cuisine and palate. Begin your food adventures with a trip to Borough Market – you can even go there on one of our walking tours if you'd prefer.

Borough Market is open for business on Fridays and Saturdays. When you arrive you'll find a vast open air food market, filled with fresh produce and meats, much of it from organic or small farms and specialist suppliers.

Broadway Market near London Fields in Shoreditch/Hackney is another fabulous food market option and is usually less crowded than Borough. On Saturdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm, sample the fantastic and diverse cuisine right at the stalls or buy fresh produce to use in meals at your flat. While you're there, stroll along Regent's Canal and check out the revitalized East London neighbourhoods.

Vegetarian Guide

If you're a vegetarian or if you just like to eat organic, you'll be pleased to discover [Alara Wholefoods \(www.alarashop.com\)](http://www.alarashop.com) at 58 Marchmont Street, not far from Russell Square. This independent retailer has a wide range of vegetarian and vegan food, plus an organic café which serves hot food from lunchtime onwards. They also have a takeaway service.

[Planet Organic \(www.planetorganic.com\)](http://www.planetorganic.com) is the UK's largest fully certified organic supermarket and has branches in Bloomsbury, Camden, Islington and Westbourne Grove.

You'll doubtless be familiar with the American chain [Wholefoods Market \(http://wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/uk/\)](http://wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/uk/) who now have a flagship store in Kensington High Street, with smaller branches in Soho and Camden.

[Veggie Heaven \(www.veggieheaven.com\)](http://www.veggieheaven.com) provides a wealth of information on eating out as a vegetarian in London. Two of London's best known vegetarian restaurants are in our part of the city: Food for Thought on Neal Street, Covent Garden, as well as the Mary Ward Centre Café at the top of Old Gloucester Street, inside the Mary Ward Center. If you like Indian food the Vegetarian's Paradise at 59 Marchmont Street

(almost opposite Alara Wholefoods) does a cheap, 'all you can eat', buffet lunch. Or go up to or Drummond Street, just behind Euston station, where you'll find a whole street full of good, inexpensive, vegetarian restaurants (Diwana Bhel-Poori House is one of the best). For the cheapest Indian meal in town, go to [Govinda's](http://www.iskcon-london.org/govindas-london.html) (www.iskcon-london.org/govindas-london.html), the Hare Krishna restaurant in Soho Square where you'll get a fresh, nutritious meal at a very affordable price. In line with their beliefs, they do not use onions, garlic or mushrooms.

Specialist Food Stores

If you suffer from a food allergy or intolerance you should be able to find specialist produce in the organic stores featured in the Vegetarian section. However the larger mainstream supermarkets also cater for special diets.

If you need to avoid foods containing ingredients such as, wheat, dairy, gluten and nuts, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose all have a 'Free From' range to suit your requirements.

You'll also find a lot of helpful information on the following websites: [Allergy UK](http://www.allergyuk.org) (www.allergyuk.org), [Coeliac UK](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) (www.coeliac.org.uk), [The Anaphylaxis Campaign](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk) (www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)

Council Tax

Council Tax is a universal tax paid by every adult in the UK that is similar to property tax in the US. As a short term student in the UK you are liable for the council tax on your flat unless it is already being covered in your rent. If you are in pre-arranged housing you will NOT have to worry about paying the council tax; it is already included (at a student discount rate) in what you are charged. If you have chosen independent housing you may be required to pay. At the moment this requirement varies council by council, and fewer are extending their student discount scheme to non-UK students. It is entirely the student's responsibility to apply for the student discount, and failure to pay the Council Tax, if required, may have long-term consequences.

You may appeal to your local council for a student discount – or in some cases a waiver – on council taxes. To do this, you will need a letter confirming your status as a student in the UK. The student life office has these letters on file should you wish to request one. Visit SR 109 **before the mid-semester break** to receive your letter and more information. We will not issue exemption letters after the break.

Photograph by
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london on a budget

Advice to the Poundwise

You don't have to tell us that London living is expensive. We live here year round and know all too well that you've got to look after the pounds.

Choosing a network

There are a lot of mobile networks to choose from and most of them offer incentive deals so it's up to you which one you choose. To get impartial advice, go to an independent phone shop such as Carphone Warehouse (www.carphonewarehouse.com) or Phones 4U (www.phones4u.co.uk).

When choosing your network, don't forget the Orange Wednesdays (www.orange.co.uk/orangewednesdays) deals where you'll be offered 2 for 1 cinema tickets (only on Wednesday!) plus 2 for 1 dining at selected branches of Pizza Express.

Mobile phone smarts

Remember that *it won't cost anything for you to receive calls*, even when you have no credit on your phone, so you can ask your parents to call

you – rather than the other way round! But it is expensive to ring UK mobiles from the US, and much cheaper to call landlines.

Even if your flat has a Sky deal with free calls to the US, this will only apply when you call US landlines and not mobiles.

In the UK it costs *significantly more* to call a mobile number than a landline, though there are exceptions depending which plan you're on. Some service providers include a bundle of free calls to others on the same network. Bottom line is, be clear what your plan does and doesn't include.

Texting (SMS) is much cheaper than phoning.

We strongly recommend that you back up your mobile phone contacts using an online storage suite, such as www.my-hub.co.uk, so that if your phone goes missing you will still have all of your friends' (and SU Londons'!) phone numbers.

Money Matters

American Express offices or the Post Office are the best places for changing money. Avoid the little tourist shops and exchange booths. You can usually get the best exchange rate on an ATM and credit cards transactions but check with your bank to see if you are charged for international ATM transactions. If you are, take out more money less frequently.

Get Educated

Get the weekly magazine, *Time Out*, or better yet, check out the website www.timeout.com/london. This guide gives you listings of events happening in London, including free events such as clubs, gigs and comedy nights, and it often has vouchers for 2 for 1 travel deals, exhibition entrances, and restaurant meals and so on. *Time Out* will also give you the low-down on cheap days out, but it is certainly worth pointing out that you are now in a capital city that affords you free access to all major museums so you really shouldn't be at a loss for something to do.

SU London Field Trips

You should take advantage of our field trips. The feedback on these has been excellent and as part of your program you get to go to a wide variety of places for no charge as the deposit is refundable. For an up to date list of what we offer, check out the [SU London website](#).

Student Cards

Ask when you go out if you get a discount with an [International Student Identity Card](#) (ISIC). Most places won't tell you up front so you have to ask. If you register for the [ISIC e-newsletter](#) you'll be kept up with the new discounts on offer.

Also make sure you get a 18+ Student Oyster Photocard for use on the London Underground. Not only do you get a whopping 30% discount on 7 day and monthly bus and Tube Travelcards, you can also use them to get discounts on London Riverboats.

Clothing

Try and stay away from the American-style clothing stores in the West End. The best place for American style stores is in America, so go native and check out the flagship Primark store in Oxford Street for good bargains and make sure you get yourself to one of London's many street markets.

Take a trip into Zone 2 – to Kilburn or Camden for example – if you're on the hunt for cheap off

the peg fashion. Generally speaking the further you stray from the city centre, the lower the prices!

Theatre Tickets

In London almost every theatre has discounts for students, called "student concessions". However, every box office has its own policy with slightly different rules, so you have to ask at the box office for each show. Plan on spending £7.50 to £20.00 for a West-End ticket, and some box offices offer their student concessions as "day seats" on the day of the performance at 10 am, some two hours before, others 1 hour or 45 minutes prior to the curtain.

Also you should know that standing room is a great way to see theatre cheaply.

The Globe Theatre (www.shakespearesglobe.com) has a fantastic season of shows and the "groundlings" get to stand in front of the stage for £5. The National Theatre

(www.nationaltheatre.org.uk) and the Donmar Warehouse (www.donmarwarehouse.com) both offer cheap student standby tickets, and when a show is sold out, it's possible to get a standing ticket for between £5 and £10. The best bargain in London is the Royal Court's (<http://royalcourttheatre.com>) standing room only at 10p. But this offer is for the day of the show only. If you don't feel like standing, the Royal Court does all tickets £7.50 on Mondays, and you'll generally find better bargains if you can go to the theatre Monday-Thursday as opposed to the weekend.

The Donmar Warehouse and the National Theatre hold a small number of day seats for each performance, which go on sale early on the day of the show – 10.30am for the Donmar and 9.30am for the National. But watch out though; if the show is really popular sometimes people will line up for hours.

The National Theatre also runs a fantastic youth-discount ticket scheme called Entry Pass for anyone aged 16-25. There is an allocation of £5 Entry Pass tickets for every performance at the Theatre. If you fall within the age limits, visit the National Theatre's website for more information and to download a free application form.

The half-price ticket booth in Leicester Square is fine, but make sure you go to the official one in middle of the Square, not one of the sketchy ones on the outskirts of the square. Generally, however, you can get cheaper tickets and better seats by a student concession at the box office so try that first. And the same goes for making reservations through Ticketmaster. Better to go directly through the box office than to pay the expensive transaction fees. You can also view the

Leicester Square ticket booth's offers online at TKTS.co.uk.

The Royal Opera House (www.roh.org.uk) also offers a student standby scheme with prices reduced to just £10 but qualify you first need to [register online](#). Once registered, you will receive information by text message to advise you of last minute availability. You will not be able to get a student standby ticket in person, only through the internet scheme.

Entertainment

Fancy a cheap night out? Want to see a British comedian's chat show being recorded? Check out the tickets on offer at the TV Recordings website: www.tvrecordings.com. These listing change often so check the site regularly.

The Prince Charles Cinema (PCC) in Leicester Square is known for its good movie deals, such as its Golden Ticket screenings, where all tickets on a selected date for a selected film are just £1.00. Throughout the week you can catch a variety of film genres, from cult movies to the latest box office hits and art house cinema. Tickets at the PCC are often a lot cheaper than the bigger cinema chains. So go to www.princecharlescinema.com for a full schedule.

Pubs

If you want to experience British culture on your doorstep, one stop is the pub. Here are a few tips to help you blend in.

Order at the bar. Pubs don't have wait staff so if you wait at your table to be served, you'll be there a long time. You need to go up to the bar, buy drinks and carry them yourself to the table.

Bar snacks. Most pubs these days sell proper food but you'll also be able to get peanuts and crisps (potato chips) at the bar. Pub convention says you should put the packet in the middle of the table and rip it right open so everyone can help themselves.

Tipping. It's not usual to tip the bar staff in pubs, so don't feel you have to. If you've been particularly pleased with the service in a pub you can add a bit to the total for the round and say, "have a drink yourself". This is pub-code for "here's a tip".

The ULU bar. The University of London Union pub at ULU www.ulucol.ac.uk has both decent prices and a good opportunity to mingle with British students.

Lastly... British pub culture is about relaxing with friends, making new ones and setting the world to rights over a drink or two. It's not about getting as wasted as possible, making a fool out yourself and waking up the following morning not sure how you got home. Londoners are used to alcohol and know when to stop - make sure you do too.

Shopping and Food

The British equivalent to the 'dollar store' is the 99p shop, also Poundsavers and Poundland. They don't guarantee to sell everything for less than a pound, but you will find great bargains. Camden Town has several pound shops, also lots of street traders and a budget supermarket (Lidl) so if you're trying to keep to a tight budget, it's definitely worth the trip – and easily accessible by bus from Faraday House. There's also a family size branch of Sainsbury's where you'll find a much greater selection of goods than any central London branches – and cheaper too.

The same applies in Islington, which has a full size Sainsbury's and Waitrose, plus a good range of budget stores in and around [Chapel Market](#). Islington is the perfect place for you to shop if you're living in pre-arranged housing.

If you shop where the locals shop, you won't go far wrong if you're trying to save money. Keep your eye out for fresh produce, herbs and spices in your neighbourhood Asian grocery store – or indeed any store that displays its wares outside on the sidewalk. There are bargains to be had for the savvy shopper!

Get in the Know

Check out the SU London website <http://sulondon.syr.edu> for links to loads of websites offering money-off vouchers for everything from shampoo to groceries and even if you just check out one, www.freestuffjunction.com, you'll be doing yourself a favour.