

KIASU GUIDE 2023

PART 3

LIFE IN LONDON



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FOREWORD

Hey Freshers!

Thank you all so much for joining us at our Pre-Departure Talk and Orientation Camp. I hope you enjoyed yourself and managed to get to know your UCL batchies and seniors alot better through the events! And most importantly, that you are PUMPED for London! We hope you are excited for future Singsoc events that we have lined up for our members for the rest of the academic year. Enough of all the administration nightmares... now's time to dive into the FUN STUFF!

We've saved the best for last in our Kiasu Guide Part III, which contains a ton of information and advice on the coolest things to do in and around London. We hope that you will use this guide for some inspiration when you're planning to explore the city. We tried our best to cover all the bases – food, entertainment, shopping (and safety too) – but we're sure that you will be doing a lot more exploring on your own anyway.

Keep a lookout for our Freshers' Fortnight happening in end-September, where we will organise interest-based activities for yall to meet more freshers and explore London together! Apart from that, you can look forward to meetups with your Singsoc parents where you can ask your questions away! :")

To receive the latest updates and information on events for freshers, join our <u>UCL SG</u> <u>Freshers 23/24 Telegram group!</u>

You can also follow UCL SingSoc on Instagram <u>@UCLsingsoc</u> and join our <u>Facebook</u> and <u>Telegram</u> groups.

As usual, feel free to reach out to us at any time for help or advice! We hope to see you at future Singsoc events IN LONDONNNN!:)

Hazel Cheng Hsin Yu

President UCL Singapore Society

BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN LONDON

PLACE	NOTES
Musicals at West End	Head to the box office on the morning of shows for cheap tickets with good views or purchase cheap tickets (with not-so-good views) online on TodayTix.
Regent's Park / Hyde Park	Both are great for picnics, sports like frisbee/football or a cheeky run :)
Primrose Hill	Only a short walk from Regent's Park, this is a great place to picnic, watch the sunset and soak in the city views!
Winter Wonderland	Admission is free during off-peak or if you book rides, attractions, games or food packages in advance with a £25 minimum spending. Go during off-peak hours to save \$\$!
Chinatown	This is THE place to go to if you're missing comfort food from home, from dim sum restaurants to Japanese and dessert parlours. There are also multiple Asian grocery stores here namely Loon Fung, Xin Long and SeeWoo . Loon Fung is the cheapest out of the 3 with See Woo being slightly cheaper if you buy large amounts. Xin Long is usually more expensive but may have some rarer condiments/snacks. TIP: Bring cash if you are going to Chinatown. Many restaurants will waive the tax from your bill if you pay in cash.
Borough Market	Some stalls to look out for are Humble Crumble (hot apple custard crumbles), Bread Ahead (doughnuts) and La Tua (pasta)!
Camden Market	Probably one of the more eccentric markets in London, with an energetic and alternative vibe. Highly recommend trying the pasta from The Cheese Wheel at the food market!
Canary Wharf	If you want to explore the CBD area of London or pretend you are in Singapore for a day, you can head over here for some skyscraper views. Further down the Jubilee Line, you

	can also check out Greenwich Park where you can find the famous Meridian Line.
Old Spitalfields Market	The original East London market. Small producers, local creatives, independent retailers and a few well-known brands under one historic roof. Prices are on the higher side here. Also, walk down a bit further from the Market to try the famous Brick Lane Bagel!
Shoreditch	With vibrant street art, you definitely won't be bored here! Brick Lane Market has become synonymous with Shoreditch and houses vintage markets, street food and hipster performances. Another place to visit in the area is Boxpark. Made from diffused shipping containers stacked on top of one another, the first level has cute home and clothing shops while the second level is mostly food. Drop by Old Spitalfields Market while you're at it! The best day to visit is Sunday! TIP: There is a playground beside the railway tracks which is
	quite a nice place to explore and take photos with the graffitied walls in the background.
Angel	Many good cafes and thrift shops in the area! You can also explore Chapel Market here!
Notting Hill	A highly Instagrammable area with its iconic pastel houses and the thriving Portobello Road Market, It has many delicious food street stalls, or if you're feeling fancy, hipster restaurants and cafes. Saturday is arguably the best day to visit the market as all the shops are in full swing.
Tate Modern	A popular modern art gallery and definitely a must-see! Admission is free, but there is a charge for some exhibitions.
Hampstead Heath	Perfect for picnics and walks through the gardens! Definitely check out the Hill Garden and Pergola and get yourself the famous Hampstead Crepes!

LONDON FOOD GUIDE

- Always ask if there's student discounts or discounts if you pay in cash (for many Asian restaurants)! :)
- Most places add a 12.5% "discretionary" service charge (you can ask to waive it but will most likely get judged so uty :).

Check out some of your seniors' Instagram food accounts for more recommendations! :)

- https://www.instagram.com/countyurblesshsins/
- https://www.instagram.com/anne_eats_food/
- https://www.instagram.com/weitingforfood/
- https://www.instagram.com/dillionishungry/
- https://www.instagram.com/hooyeats/
 - For the serious foodies, check out Kelly's sick compilation of the best food places <u>HERE!</u>

Do check out our <u>UCLSS London Food Map</u> that compiles all the MUST-TRY restaurants listed in Kelly's Food Guide!



TOO GOOD TO GO

If you are a culinary disaster/no time to cook/you are poor or all of the above, Too Good To Go might literally be your only hope. This app allows you to buy surplus food from stores for a fraction of the price, usually during off peak hours. You can reserve these surprise bags/meals in advance as well (reserve popular places the day before) and you just need to go down during the allocated timing to collect it. Portions are usually really big (~3-4 times value of what you pay) and if you are the last customer before the store closes, they often give you extra food for free if you handsome/pretty (jk just ask nicely) Generally 4+ stars rated places are good.

Some places that are good to get TGTG bags from:

- Wasabi (Sushi/Asian Food)
- **Leon** (Fusion Fast Food that is quite affordable too)
- **Any sushi place** (Usually need to book in advance)
- Starbucks (Pastries and Baked Goods)
- Costa Coffee (Sandwiches/ M&S kinda meals)
- **Pret** (Same as above)
- Ole & Steen (Starbucks +)
- **M&S** (Can get ready to eat meals and random groceries from here if you cook)
- **Bubble Tea/Drinks** (If you have a sweet tooth, there are some in Camden)

SHOPPING IN LONDON

EVERYDAY/HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- Amazon: You can conveniently purchase many of the items you'll need from Amazon, which delivers straight to your accommodations. What's even better is that once you've completed the on-site enrollment, you can apply for Student Prime at any point in time, granting you a 6-month free trial of its Prime Subscription that includes one-day deliveries and unlimited access to Prime Video.
- Primark: Primark is essentially the budget store which sells almost everything you might need, such as clothes, pillows, bedding and kitchenware at most likely the cheapest prices in central London. Only cons are that the quality might be a bit sus / poor for certain items, the shop has poor ventilation and the queue is always long. The Primark closest to school is located just outside Tottenham Court Road tube station!
- **Ryman Stationery**: If you ever need school stationery supplies, or urgently need to print some documents (although you can do this in the school's libraries).
- **Flying Tiger**: Aesthetic household items like bowls, baking tools and random cute things you never knew you needed! There's one branch very close to school along Tottenham Court Road.

FASHION

- Oxford/Regent Street: All the big brands H&M, UNIQLO, JD can be found along Oxford/Regent Street, which is just about a 15 minutes walk from school!
- **Westfield**: Much further from Bloomsbury is Westfield London, which is a huge shopping mall located in Shepherd's Bush. Worth a visit if you miss SG style shopping malls
- London Designer Outlet: Located at Wembley, you can find all the international brands here as well.
- UCL Clothes Swap Shop/Vintage Sales: UCL organises monthly clothes swaps where you can bring any number of clothes to swap for however many clothes you want! UCL also sometimes holds sales for pre-loved clothes, like the Vintage Kilo Sale during Freshers' Week last year, where you could get a kilogram's worth of vintage clothes for £15. While the quality of the clothes you can get at these sales might sometimes be doubtful, it is undeniably cheap.

- **Charity shops:** These are shops run by charities like Oxfam or Cancer Research UK which sell second-hand clothes and everyday items. The clothes are usually great value for money and you get to support a charitable cause!
- **Thrift Shops:** Old Portobello Road Market, Angel, Bricklane, Camden

GROCERY SHOPPING IN LONDON

Grocery shopping in London might seem intimidating at first because you don't know anything about the grocery stores. However, after exploring the area, you will be able to compare prices, get a feel of which grocery stores sell what items and at what price point.

TIPS:

- Bring along your grocery bags so that you don't have to pay for it. Always keep one in your bag because you never know when you might want to go shopping.
- Download the respective supermarket apps and register to be a member for free! Scan your card to earn points and check out the apps for exclusive clubcard discounts and rewards.

Supermarket (Western)

Lidl	 Basically the budget version of NTUC. Any groceries you are looking to buy, Lidl usually has it for the cheapest, from meats to spices and sauces to vegetables and dairy. Look out for Lidl's cheaper stickers for when they need to clear certain perishables such as meat. You might have luck finding these in the clearance section which is a green tray where the seafood is sold. Download the Lidl app for digital receipts and occasional rewards (10-30% off some small items). Can usually spend around £20-£30 and have enough groceries for 1 week+, depending on how much you eat.
	What to buy: - Meat (chicken, pork, beef, sausages, frozen) - Fruits and Vegetables (non-asian) - Spices and sauces - Dairy products (milk & cheese) - Carbs (rice is cheap AF but questionable quality, egg noodles slap tho) - Drinks - Seafood (salmon is alright but everything else kinda sus) Nearest one to UCL: Tottenham Court Road, opposite Warren St Stn
Aldi	Similar price points to Lidl, but certain items might be cheaper, certain items might be more expensive. What to buy:

	- Same as Lidl
	Nearest one to UCL: Camden High Street, near Camden Town Stn
Sainsbury's	There are generally 2 types of Sainsbury's: the small dingy kind like the one in Brunswick v.s. the Big Sainsbury's like the one at Tottenham Court Road/Camden. If you can, I would recommend going to the big stores if you want to buy a big batch of groceries because the small ones have very limited groceries.
	What to buy: - At the small store, just buy small items like drinks, snacks, fruits etc. (whatever you need in a pinch because you are too laze to travel) - Meal deals if you are feeling broke and lazy - Everything else at the big store
Tesco	Tesco is kinda like your convenience store (think 7/11) but they sell groceries too. The options here are relatively limited and the price is slightly higher than most places because they are just smaller in general. However, the great thing about Tesco is that they are literally everywhere and the queue is usually short. You can also collect parcels from Tesco if you order stuff online (more on that later). Download the Tesco app and create a free account to get discounts.
	What to buy: - Same as the small Sainsbury's - Tesco meal deal if you are feeling broke and lazy
Waitrose	The cold storage of London, but like on steroids. In terms of pricing, this is pretty much unanimously to be the most expensive grocery store in London, from personal experience and from online research. However, the plus point is that Waitrose is usually less crowded and more well stocked because of the higher prices. And their produce is better in terms of quality.
	Nearest one to UCL: Brunswick What to buy: - Fresh produce, because that would probably justify the higher prices you are paying compared to the other stores - Anything on discount - MUST-TRY: Waitrose Tiramisu (best budget dessert hands down)
Asda	I don't think anyone will go to one because the nearest one to school is located at like Whitechapel, but I have heard it is basically as cheap if not cheaper than Lidl, so if you do stay near one I highly recommend

	checking it out.
Iceland	Prices are similar to Lidl and Aldi. If you're lazy, Iceland has a wide variety of frozen food and pre-cut ingredients. Many of their items are sold in bulk though, hence the cheaper prices. Just that there aren't really many near to school. Nearest one to UCL: Kentish Town or Islington
M&S	Most bougee supermarket. Umm I don't really hear of people buying their groceries from M&S, but you could if you wanted to?

Supermarket (Asian)

Yohome	A newly opened Chinese mart near the multi-story Waterstones. Has a pretty decent variety of Chinese goods and is more affordable than Tian Tian but may not have everything you want because it is smaller. Also has a student discount !
Tian Tian	The Asian mart for everyone living near Brunswick (i.e. most of the Garden Halls folks)! More expensive than Yohome, but has a larger variety of items, especially familiar snacks and food (Hello Panda, pineapple tarts, White Rabbit candy, boxed mochi, Indomie, Hai Di Lao sauces, sometimes even tinned Milo). They also have a bakery section selling bakes from Chinatown Bakery (egg tarts, char siew buns, red bean buns, black sesame buns etc) - if you go down at the end of the day you might be able to snag some at clearance prices. Register as a student member to get a student discount!
Loon Fung	Will usually offer most Asian food you need at the best price in central London, ranging from soy sauce, rice to hotpot ingredients and more. If you like eating roast pork belly, they sell a whole uncut slab suitable for roasting in the oven (slightly cheaper too). They sell a good assortment of fresh produce such as seafood (whole fish/prawns) and pork at decent prices if you know how to cook them. If you are looking to buy Asian groceries in bulk at a decent price, this is probably the place I would recommend!
Xin Long	The store I go to if I cannot find whatever I want in Loon Fung. Sells quite an assortment of snacks and condiments so if you want something more niche, you might have better luck finding it here. Not true for all items, but similar items are usually slightly more expensive than Loon Fung, however it is usually a marginal difference so don't stress too much about it.

See Woo	Located down the street from Loon Fung and Xin Long, this is essentially a slightly bigger Loon Fung that has comparable prices with a slightly different assortment of goods. Notable difference is that See Woo has LIVE seafood if you like your food fresh like that. Overall, I think this might be the cheapest store in Chinatown but don't quote me on that. Between this and Loon Fung, you can't really go wrong with choosing either for your general asian grocery shopping.
Oseyo	Personally, not a huge fan. Things here are overly expensive and you can get things for much cheaper elsewhere. Only recommendation is kimchi - sometimes the kimchi here can be a lot cheaper when they're on discount.

Note:

Apart from the big chain supermarkets, there are a few smaller grocery stores that cater to other cuisines - a halal grocery store along the Brunswick stretch, a Vietnamese/Thai one along Camden High Street, etc. The other fun thing about London is the many farmers' markets where you can buy more interesting fresh produce and groceries! Borough Market is a cheese haven, while Islington Farmers' Market (every Sunday) and Growing Communities' Farmers' Market (every Saturday) have wonderful selections of colourful and interesting veggies and mushrooms. There are many more exciting markets to visit and I recommend just simply exploring!

A ROUGH PACKING LIST

TIP: Pre-order items from Amazon / Ask your friends going earlier to help you buy items ; Common necessities such as Brita Water Filter Jugs, Pillows & Duvets **sell out quickly** in the first few weeks (starting 10 Sep)!

Item	Remarks
A week's worth of clothes	5-7 tops are sufficient and try not to overpack as you have limited cupboard space + will be a headache when you move + you will probably end up purchasing clothes while you're there too! Get Uniqlo HeatTech in SG as well because it is a lot cheaper
Winter wearPuffer JacketsWaterproof Jacket / Windbreaker	Bring whatever you already own but try not to buy in SG as there are more options in London and they are usually better quality for price. You can get cheap winter apparel from thrift stores in London / Vinted (UK carousell)! Temperatures don't dip too low until mid/end-October so don't worry about being cold when you reach. Get a waterproof jacket for when it rains too.
Studying Stuff	Bring your Laptop and/or Ipad as well as some common stationary (i.e. pen, pencil, ruler eraser, tape) because it is a lot more expensive in London.
Footwear	A pair of slippers/slides, sneakers, sports shoes and hiking shoes (for the adventurous ones) should do the trick. You can buy these in London too.
Important Documents	Academic certificates / Important VISA Documents / Health Documents etc.
Umbrella / Cap	It rains a lot in the UK so helps to always be prepared
Cash	It may take up to 1 month for your bank account to be set up during peak period + some Asian restaurants provide discounts for cash payments + some countries in EU still only accept cash
Travel-sized / hiking backpack / duffle bag	Handy if you're planning trips to Europe on budget carriers with baggage limits. Carry-on baggage size for most airlines is 25L.

 Some reminders of home Pictures taken with loved ones and friends SG flag (for the really patriotic ones) 	:')
 Some local delights SGrean snacks (Milo, Snacks) Asian Paste Packs (eg. Bak Kut Teh Paste, Curry Paste etc. (if you cook)) 	There are Asian marts in London which sell these items, but at quite obscene prices. If you have space in your baggage, just bring some over to enjoy a taste of home :')
 Basic toiletries 1 roll of toilet paper Shampoo and soap Towel, bath mat 	These items are not strictly necessary. You're only recommended to pack them if your flight arrives in London in the evening because some stores close really early and you might not have time to get them. Otherwise, save yourself the trouble and get it here.
Other essentials • Spare glasses • Laptop, iPad, etc. • Personal medication	Glasses aren't as readily available in London and can be quite expensive, so bring some over if you do need them. Electronic products (e.g. Apple devices - take advantage of the student discounts) are easier and cheaper to get in Singapore as well! Bring sufficient medication because the NHS is not great and I recommend bringing Pipakao! Convenient travel-size packets are not sold in London, only the big bottles. Very handy when you're down with freshers' flu :/ (Paracetamol, Charcoal Pills, Antihistamines and Plasters are highly recommended too)

STAYING SAFE IN LONDON

While London is certainly no Singapore in terms of safety, you generally don't have to be too concerned while in London. The environment may feel foreign and hostile at the start, but if you don't go looking for trouble, trouble usually does not find you. However, you do need to look out for your safety when you are in poorly lit areas at night/areas with higher crime rates (i.e. Camden). You have to remember this is not Singapore and people will take advantage of you as a poor clueless foreigner if given the opportunity. Take note of the tips below to make sure you do not make yourself an easy target.

- 1. If you look like an easy target for physical assault, get yourself a personal attack alarm (example). As the name suggests, these devices emit a huge ass sound when you activate them, which can help to alert others in case you're in distress. You can get them on Shopee for <\$10. This is your best bet to make yourself feel safe if you're getting around the city on your own. Just FYI pepper sprays and carrying around blades longer than 3 inches are illegal in the UK.</p>
- 2. Strength in numbers. As a general rule of thumb, try not to walk alone when it is dark. If this isn't an option, take public transport and avoid dingy, quiet small streets (walk in well lit main roads if you can) if you would rather walk. It is also a typical practice for friends to walk each other home when it gets late. (ahem for the guys please gentleman a bit, for the ladies don't paiseh to ask)
- 3. Look out for phone thieves! While walking around, do not openly carry any valuables in your hands you'll be a prime target for robbers on motorcycles/modified electric bikes (they make a high pitched whining sound). They usually operate when it is dark so make sure you keep your guard up then. Keep all your valuables in your inner pockets as well to prevent being pickpocketed. If you really have to use your phone, check your surroundings first and go to a wall so that your body is shielding your phone. Look out for people asking for directions with a map (they cover your phone and steal it) when you are eating with your phone on the table (just don't do that honestly).



4. If you're going to be clubbing or just going to have a few drinks at a pub, **go with friends whom you trust**. While you're at these venues, **watch out for your drinks**

- and never, ever, leave them unattended. There was a series of incidents of spiking last academic year. Make sure someone knows where you are at all times.
- 5. While there aren't really any no-go zones in Central London in general, **Holborn and Chinatown** specifically seem to have a *higher incidence of pickpocketing/snatching* cases. The **curved road outside Euston Church** where the farmer's market is also seems to be a hotspot for phone thieves (personally saw 2 phones get snatched in front of me last year). Camden is also somewhat known for being a bit sketchy at night but usually is just drunkards/weirdos who you can outrun (hopefully).
- 6. If you're living in student accommodations, please take care to **lock your rooms** when you're out. There have been instances of thieves tailgating students into the accommodations and stealing stuff from unlocked rooms. Just before a senior checked-out, the entire TV that was at the lobby of their accommodations was stolen you'll never know what might happen.
- 7. Racism wise not to worry. London is an incredibly diverse and global city. Cases of outright and overt racism on the streets are rare. The worst I have heard of is people saying 你好 when they see Chinese people but just ignore them and you should be fine.
- 8. Hotlines of emergency services:
 - a. **999** Main emergency number for police, ambulance, fire brigade, coastguard, cliff rescue, mountain rescue, cave rescue, etc.
 - b. **112** This operates exactly the same as 999 and directs you to exactly the same emergency call centre. The important thing about 112 is that it will work on a mobile phone anywhere in the world.
 - c. **101** Use 101 when you want to contact the police, but it's not an emergency (i.e. an immediate response is not necessary and/or will not serve any purpose).
 - d. 111 The non-emergency medical number. This is available nationwide and replaced and expanded on the former NHS Direct service. Use this for illnesses and minor injuries where life isn't threatened, but you would like some advice on what to do next.

SOME HACKS AND MORE

- I. COFFEE: For coffee lovers, check out Pret A Manger's monthly drinks subscription for £25/month (£12.50 for the first month). Get up to 5 cups of coffee/drinks a day, with a minimum of 30 min intervals between redemptions. BUT: Be warned that Pret's coffee is not the greatest.
- II. STUDENT DISCOUNTS: Download applications like Unidays, Student Beans, Today Tix, and Student Pulse for discounts and promotions for shopping, musicals, and concerts. Before I get something (e.g. Flixbus, Gym Membership) I would go to these apps and search if there are student promotions which will help you save a lot of money if you are lucky. You can also sign up for Mousetrap membership (free!) to get cheap tickets to plays and musicals (they are mostly under £10!!). Sign up for the mailing list of arts organisations like Southbank Centre, National Theatre, and Barbican Centre to keep yourself updated with events.
- **III. SHOPPING:** Get your memberships for grocery shopping by downloading their apps! Waitrose, Nectar Card, Tesco, Ikea, Boots, Superdrug. All these shops have free memberships to collect points that you can spend on future purchases.
- **IV. HEALTH:** Do ALL your health checkups and vaccination in Singapore! For those who wear retainers, we suggest making a 2nd pair in case you lose it in the UK. One of us lost ours and had to fork out £260 just for 1 retainer that's twice the price of what you have to pay in Singapore! Do prepare an extra set of spectacles for emergency use as you cannot simply buy spectacles off the shelf (like Owndays) in the UK! You have to take an eye test (for a fee) and get a prescription from the optometrist before ordering your spectacles (which will take 2 weeks). However, if you know your prescription, you can buy contact lenses online in the UK for a decent price.
- V. TRAVEL: Buy a railcard and oyster card (no need for the more expensive student photo oyster), and link them to get ½ off tube fares during off-peak periods! Just go to the oyster top up machine at tube stations and approach the staff there. The railcard will also allow you to get ½ off rail fares for when you want to travel out of London! Another hack if you can wait is to wait till Black Friday (end Nov) to buy the 3-year railcard, because there will be a discount during then. However, if you are planning on travelling around by rail before that Black Friday rolls around, just buy the railcard because you will likely still end up saving money (check if there are back to school discounts!)

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Join our socials using these links! We hope that this guide was useful, and we will see you in the +44 soon!

UCLSS Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/uclsingsoc

UCLSS FB Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/uclsingaporesociety/

UCLSS Telegram Announcement Channel https://t.me/joinchat/r Yma0kXo7JIMjc1

UCLSS Email uclsingsoc@googlemail.com

For Freshers:
UCL Website
http://uclss.weebly.com

UCL Singaporean Freshers Telegram Group https://t.me/+YHqqtrApHm0zNzdl