

The background of the cover is a photograph of several Union Jack flags hanging from a string. In the center, a sign with the word 'ENGLISH' is visible, though it is out of focus. The text is overlaid on this image.

# 101 BUDGET BRITAIN TRAVEL TIPS

BY  
ANGLOTOPIA

# 101 Budget Britain Travel Tips

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By  
Anglotopia

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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
1. How to Set a Realistic Budget.....	11
2. Beware of Bank Holiday Weekends.....	13
3. Watch out for Half-Term.....	15
4. Protect Your Trip with Travel Insurance.....	16
5. Top 5 Free Things to do in Lincoln, England.....	17
6. Top 5 Free Things to do in Norwich, England.....	18
7. Book your Flights on a Wednesday.....	19
8. Travel with a Carry-On Bag Only.....	20
9. Amazon.co.uk is Your Friend.....	21
10. The Cheapest Way to get to Central London.....	22
11. Get an Oyster Card or Go Contactless.....	23
12. Where to Get a Free Maps.....	24
13. Save Money with Budget Flights Within Britain.....	25
14. Savings on Car Rentals.....	26
15. Getting a 'Free' Plane Ticket with Points? .....	30
16. Save Money on Train Travel in the UK.....	32
17. Save Money on Rail Fares - The Britrail Pass.....	36
18. First Class Means FIRST CLASS in Britain.....	37
19. Skip the Train and Ride the Bus Instead.....	38
20. Always Use a Licensed Taxi - Not Just in London.....	39
21. Top 5 Free Things to do in Bath.....	40
22. Cash, ATMs, and Credit Card Fees.....	42
23. Watch out for the Congestion Charge in London.....	45
24. Bike Rentals from the Cycle Hire Scheme.....	46
25. Cross the Thames for Free.....	47
26. Just Walk to Save Some Money.....	48
27. Top 5 Free Things to do in Glasgow, Scotland.....	49
28. Top 5 Free Things to do in Cardiff, Wales.....	50
29. The Lowdown on Budget Hotels in Britain.....	51
30. The Cheapest, Cleanest Hotels in London? .....	53
31. Consider a B&B Over a Hotel.....	54
32. Hostels to Save Money in Britain.....	55
33. Live Like a Local with Airbnb.....	56
34. The Glories of Couchsurfing.....	57
35. Top 5 Free Things to do in Manchester, England.....	58
36. Top 5 Free Things to do in Liverpool, England.....	59
37. Find a Local Grocery Store or Snack Shop.....	60
38. Breakfast on the Cheap in London and Britain.....	61

39. Free Tea! .....	62
40. Why Not Share a Meal? .....	63
41. A Dirt Cheap Lunch – Ready-Made Sandwiches.....	64
42. To Save Money - Just Don't Tip at all in Britain.....	65
43. Fast Food is Your Friend - No Shame in McDonald's.....	66
44. Don't Wait to Eat at the Airport.....	67
45. Top 5 Free Things to do in Bristol, England.....	68
46. Top 5 Free Things to do in Nottingham, England.....	69
47. Top 5 Tourist Attractions to Avoid in London.....	70
48. Just What are 'Concessions' Anyway? .....	72
49. Budget Tip: Don't Forget Your Student ID.....	73
50. Tourist Information Centres.....	74
51. How to See Britain's Cathedrals for Free.....	75
52. Free Fun: London's Parks.....	76
53. Join the National Trust for to Thousands of Properties.....	77
54. English Heritage Overseas Visitor Pass.....	78
55. The Telly is Free Entertainment.....	79
56. Take a Cheap Cruise on the Thames with the Tate-to-Tate.....	80
57. Get 2-for-1 Entry to Britain's Attractions.....	81
58. The Cheapest Bus Tour in London - The Heritage Line.....	82
59. Free British Audio Tours - Rick Steves' Audio Europe App.....	83
60. Consider the London Pass for Savings in London.....	84
61. Cheap London Guided Walks.....	85
62. Top 5 Free Things to do in Birmingham, England.....	86
63. Top 5 Free Things to do in Newcastle, England.....	87
64. Where to Get Half Price Theatre Tickets in London.....	88
65. Best Places in London to Hear Free Music.....	89
66. People Watching is Free! .....	90
67. Read Local British Newspapers to Discover.....	91
68. Book a Dinner and Theatre Combo Deal.....	92
69. Top 5 Free Things to do in Leicester, England.....	93
70. Top 5 Free Things to do in Aberdeen, Scotland.....	94
71. Pay Attention to your Coins.....	95
72. Buying Souvenirs on the Cheap.....	96
73. Don't Buy British DVDs – They Won't Work at Home.....	97
74. Don't Convert to Dollars at Checkout.....	98
75. Hold on to Your Receipts for a VAT Refund at the Airport.....	100
76. Consider Joining Historic Royal Palaces.....	101
77. Shop at Local Markets - Avoid Touristy Markets.....	102
78. Candy Makes a Great Souvenir for Family Back Home.....	103
79. British Books on a Budget? Try Used Bookstores.....	104
80. What About Budget Transatlantic Airlines? .....	105

81. Duty-Free Shopping at the Airport.....	106
82. Top 5 Free Things to do in Edinburgh, Scotland.....	107
83. Top 5 Free Things to do in Brighton, England.....	108
84. Top 5 Free Things to Do in Belfast, Northern Ireland.....	109
85. Cheap Phone Calls Home.....	110
86. Saving on Taxis in London and Beyond.....	111
87. Smartphone Tips.....	112
88. You Don't Need a Passport Cover.....	113
89. Don't Waste Your Money on a Travel Voltage Converter.....	114
90. Don't Waste Money on Airplane Chargers.....	115
91. Top 5 Free Things to do in Coventry, England.....	116
92. Top 5 Free Things to do in Bournemouth, England.....	117
93. 5 Free Things to do in Cumbria.....	118
94. Don't Be Afraid to Buy it There.....	120
95. Don't Carry all of your Money with You.....	122
96. Stock up on Camera Memory Cards and Batteries.....	123
97. How to Find Free Public Toilets in Britain.....	124
98. How About Avoiding London All Together? .....	125
99. Top 5 Free Things to do in Plymouth, England.....	126
100. Top 5 Free Things to do in Dover, England.....	127
101. Don't Forget to Have Fun! .....	128
About Anglotopia.....	131



# Introduction to the 2nd Edition

**M**uch has changed since we wrote the first edition of 101 Budget Britain Travel Tips almost ten years ago. We have changed. Travel has changed (and I don't just mean because of COVID-19). And Britain has changed.

So, rewriting this book was quite a challenge. I had to scrap about a quarter of the original tips because they weren't relevant or the advice was no longer any good.

Also, the way we personally travel has changed quite a bit. When we first started Anglotopia in 2007 we were 'new adults' just out of college, so our travel was based on saving as much money as possible just so we could go to Britain. While we still try to travel frugally these days, we've also had a lot of experience of the pitfalls of sticking to the cheapest options possible. Our focus on travel now is to save money where we can, but also to be willing to spend a little extra where it counts so we make the most of our trips to Britain.

Still, there are many things that we Anglophiles can do to save on travel in the United Kingdom, and there are still 101 good tips in this book to help you (and I'm sure we could find 101 more!). But the best thing you can do is to pick and

choose the things that matter to you most so that you can get maximum enjoyment for what you're willing to spend.

It's still unclear what will change with travel in the UK after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. And much WILL change. There will be fewer attractions to visit, but there will also be plenty of new opportunities from the ashes as people seek to start new travel-related businesses and take advantage of a resurgent market. The desire for people to visit the UK hasn't disappeared because of the pandemic, so when it's over, there will be a recovery; it might be slow at first, but it will rebound. I can't be the only one with a trip planned and ready to go as soon as it's safe and acceptable to travel.

The ethos behind this book is reflected in how we produced it. We want the book to be as affordable as possible - there's no point in charging a high price for a book that is supposed to save you money! So, unlike the other books in this series, there are no color pictures to reduce printing costs and the page count so we can offer a low price. We hope this compact little book will help you build the knowledge to have affordable and enjoyable trips to Britain.

Jonathan & Jacqueline Thomas  
Publishers  
Anglotopia





# How to Set a Realistic Budget for your Trip to Great Britain

The number one thing you can do to ensure that your trip goes smoothly is to plan ahead well in advance. Everything from where you are going to stay to what you are going to eat to what you are going to see – it all starts in the planning stages. When thinking about all of this, it is really important to start with the money you plan to spend and what will come out of these funds. For example, will your hotel bill come out of this, or will that be paid ahead of time?

As you are planning the days of your trip, do some research. Many attractions and sites are free in England, such as most museums. Some attractions, such as the Tower of London and other historical palaces, are not free. If you are staying in London, keep in mind that it is one of the priciest cities in the world. That does not mean that it can't be done on a budget; you just really need to plan ahead. Once you know the cost of the attractions, set a loose itinerary and see how much it will cost you to see what you want to see.

Along with seeing the sights, you are going to have to plan how you will get to those sights. It is awesome if you are within walking distance, but what if you aren't? You can make your way around most cities cheaply using public transportation. Do some research here. A lot of public transportation systems offer some sort of multiple ride program, and this may save you a lot of money. Another good thing to know is when does public transport run? On one of my first trips abroad, I had a very early train to catch. I went to jump on the Tube in London only to see that it was closed! In those days, the Tube didn't run 24 hours a day - nowadays some lines do. I ended up having to take a cab,

which was an unexpected expense. So, always check the hours of the train/Tube lines you need to use.

One of the most important things in your budget is food. I have found myself thinking “If I only eat one meal a day or just snack throughout the day, I will have more money to see things.” In my experience, this is a huge mistake. You need to eat well. Set a realistic budget for food. A good hearty breakfast is a necessity, and also plan for a light lunch and a big dinner. The cheapest way to eat is to get a takeaway sandwich and a packet of crisps or buy fast food (you can eat a whole meal from McDonald’s for under £5). Do not deprive yourself of food money for other things. You will end up hungry and feeling lousy. You want to be in top shape to see the sites because there is often a lot of walking involved. Make sure to stay hydrated too!

Last but not least, make sure to leave a little “cushion” of funds for the unexpected. It really is a good idea to have some emergency funds should you need them for any reason. Make sure you can access these funds while you are abroad if necessary. They won’t do you much good if you can’t get to them. A credit card with some available credit is handy for this.

Another word of caution here is to be street smart when trying to cut costs. For instance, never take an unlicensed taxicab in the hopes of getting a better deal. You won’t!

Remember: Plan an itinerary deciding what you want to see, research entrance fees for attractions and the cost of transportation to get there and set a good meal plan for yourself. With a little bit of planning and forethought, you can have a wonderful time on your vacation abroad.

Based on our experience, a good estimate for a trip to Britain centered on London is about \$3,000- 4,000 USD for a single person – for a about a week and add a couple of grand if there’s two of you or a small family. You can do it for less, but that all depends on how much you want to suffer.

# 2. Beware of Bank Holiday Weekends

If you're going to be in Britain on a bank holiday weekend, be prepared for things to be closed, to close early, be crowded, and also to be more expensive.

A bank holiday is a public holiday in Britain where most of the country is off work – that is, except for people who work in tourist hotspots. It can also be more expensive to travel on those weekends as you'll have to share attractions, lodging, airplanes, and the roads with other Brits – which means prices will be higher as they are peak travel times. This also means that anything free will be crowded with Brits in search of cheap things to do on a bank holiday!

While most museums and major attractions will be open, they usually keep special holiday hours (often the same as Sunday hours).

Here's a list of the usual bank holidays so you can avoid them:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May Bank Holiday (first week of May)
- Spring Bank Holiday (first week of June)
- Summer Bank Holiday (last Monday in August)
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Some of the holidays will vary on their observance between Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Also, if a bank holiday is

on a weekend, a 'substitute' weekday becomes a bank holiday, usually the following Monday. Check locally or [Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk) for the latest dates.

# 3. Watch out for Half-Term

**B**ritain's schoolkids usually get a one-week break in the middle of their semesters, and this time off is called half-term. This means that Britain's popular tourist attractions will be mobbed with kids and families as they seek to take advantage of the days off. Free attractions will be especially mobbed. We've seen lines stretching around blocks in London with people waiting to get in - just because it was half-term and they were free.

While you'll have to contend with more crowds, keep a lookout for special half-term deals. Many of the railways, museums, and other attractions will offer special half-term deals - even if you're from outside the country. Many will do a two-for-one deal or offer kids entry for free.

When is half-term time in Britain? That will depend on which part of Britain you're in, but here's a rough guide:

- Autumn term: Early September to mid-December (half term: late October)
- Spring Term: Early January to Easter (half term: mid-February)
- Summer Term: Easter to mid-July (half term: late May/early June)



# 4. Protect Your Trip with Travel Insurance

**B**ad things happen. Flights get canceled. Hotels get overbooked. Natural disasters happen. Pandemics spread worldwide. While it's an added cost to your trip, you may want to consider getting some type of travel insurance.

Our biggest reason for recommending this is that if something happens and the onus isn't on your airline or hotel to fix the problem, you have to fix it yourself. If you're on a budget, how can you afford to get yourself out of a sticky situation?

You can expect to spend \$100-200 per person for good travel insurance. It's worth the peace of mind. While it's uncommon for American tourists to buy travel insurance, peace of mind is priceless (though look at reviews for **GOOD** travel insurance, you don't want to be fighting with someone on the phone in a foreign country).

# 5. Top 5 Free Things to do in Lincoln

Lincoln is most famous for its stunning cathedral, but there's plenty of other things to see and do that won't break the pocketbook. Here's our list of free things to do:

- **Lincoln Cathedral** - You can enter free of charge and gaze at the nave, spend time in the quiet Morning Chapel, or visit the shop. There is an admission charge for the rest of the cathedral.
- **The Collection** - Visitors to historic Lincoln can enjoy a fabulous free-to-enter museum and the region's premier art gallery, the Usher.
- **Museum of Lincolnshire Life** - Enjoy free entry to the largest and most diverse community museum in Lincolnshire.
- **Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Visitor Centre** - While a little far out of town, you can explore Britain's rich aviation heritage here. There is a charge for guided tours of the collection.
- **Explore Canals** - Explore Lincoln's beautiful canals.

# 6.

## Top 5 Free Things to do in Norwich

**N**orwich is a lovely town near the North Sea that has many exciting attractions to visit. We've put together a list of our favorite free things to do:

- **The Old Skating Rink Gallery** - The South Asian Decorative Arts and Crafts Collection (SADACC) presents its extensive collection of the everyday arts, crafts, and cultures of South Asia in this gallery, only 50 meters from the Forum in Norwich.
- **Norwich Cathedral** – This magnificent Romanesque Cathedral is open all day to visitors of all faiths and none. Set in beautiful grounds, it is an awe-inspiring and welcoming building. With spectacular architecture, magnificent art, and fascinating history, it is well worth a visit.
- **The Forum** - This is a stunning community building in the city center and is the ideal place to meet any time of the year.
- **Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts** - This inspirational public art museum at the University of East Anglia (UEA) is a short distance from Norwich city center.
- **The Assembly House** - In the heart of the city, this fine Georgian historic house is a leading venue for the arts, concerts, exhibitions, and meetings.

# 7. Book your Flights on a Wednesday

**W**hen it comes to booking your airfare to Britain, there are a few things you can do to save some money. Here's our biggest suggestion: fly on a Wednesday.

Mid-week airfares are almost always lower than traveling on the weekend. You can also save money by flying on a Tuesday or a Thursday but, usually, Wednesday is the cheapest day to fly to Britain.

British Airways has a great booking system that lets you see the airfare for each day of the week around your preferred date. This is an incredibly useful tool.

It can be inconvenient workwise to book a vacation leaving mid-week, but you'll definitely save some money this way. This applies to coming home too - if you plan to come home on a Wednesday, airfares will also be cheaper.

# 8.

## Travel with a Carry-On Bag Only

It's no secret that airlines are trying to get every last penny they can get out of travelers, and one of their most innovative ways is to charge for your checked bags. Well, the joke's on them, because if you pack cannily, all you'll need is a carry-on bag for your trip. This is a great way to save money while flying to Britain. You'll also get through the airport much faster, as you won't have to wait for baggage reclaim.

The other passengers may hate you as your bag will take up more space in the overhead bin, but these days it's every traveler for himself!

The only problem with this plan is that, most likely, you will return with more than you left with in souvenirs and other purchases. Consider shipping those home or checking a souvenir-only bag on your return trip. Memories cost nothing while souvenirs do twice – when you buy them and when you have to try and get them home!

Beware the 'budget' transatlantic carriers that have popped up in recent years. While they have rock-bottom airfares to Britain, they charge for everything, including carry-on bags. As I'm writing this during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's not clear if any of the budget transatlantic carriers will survive but, if any do, they will return to their old tricks of charging for everything.

# 9.

## Amazon.co.uk is Your Friend

**W**e've all been there – you've arrived in Britain, and you forgot something. This causes two problems – you have to find the item and go buy it, and you have to pay money you didn't budget for the item. This has happened to us a few times over the years, and the 'easy' solution (other than going without) is to buy something on Amazon.co.uk.

They will usually have the cheapest prices on most things. And Britain is a small island; even if you're not a Prime member, most items will be delivered to you the next day after they ship. So, like me once, if you forgot a camera battery, you can just buy it on Amazon and have it delivered to your hotel, B&B, or self-catering property.

There are, of course, other online retailers in Britain, but Amazon is the biggest with the largest selection. Start there; if you can't find it, just search for it on Google, and you'll find what you need.

Or call a local shop and go on an adventure to find the needed item!

# 10. The Cheapest Way to get to Central London from Heathrow

**W**ell, walk. Just kidding! The most affordable way to get into central London from Heathrow Airport is to simply take the London Underground. You can take the Piccadilly Line from Heathrow straight into central London for the cost of a cup of coffee. It will take about 40 minutes or so and can be inconvenient with luggage, but this is the cheapest way bar walking. Buses (also called coaches in Britain) are another way to get into central London cheaply. But the bus will take the longest time.