

STUDYING ABROAD SUSTAINABLY in ENGLAND



PRELIMINARY NOTES:

Welcome to England! You've made it this far, and I'm so excited for what you're going to experience here. I'm Olivia, and I studied abroad in London. This is a summary of my experience there and what I learned about living sustainably abroad. My homes are Toronto, New York and Boston, so I never thought twice about what could be different about living sustainably in a modern city like London. To my surprise, I soon discovered that London has its own unique strengths and weaknesses when it comes to living green. My hope is that through these notes, you'll start thinking about your footprint abroad and incorporating sustainable practices into your experience.

MAJOR SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES:

TRANSPORTATION—TAKE THE TUBE!**

If you're based in London, congrats! London is easily one of the most accessible cities I've ever lived in, with tons of alternative options to cars. The London tube has countless clean, quick lines that will get you where you need to go. You can also expect very few delays. Biking is also huge, especially for young Londoners living in the city for longer periods of time. Almost all student housing and apartments will advertise bike storage, and the streets are easy and safe to navigate (with a helmet, of course!). If tubing or cycling don't float your boat, rest assured knowing that London is easily walkable. I spent so many free hours of my day walking across the city - in my opinion, this is one of the best ways to see the city and really feel the energy of the people and the place.

Obviously, London is an outlier when compared to more rural parts of England, so fast public transportation and walking may not be possible everywhere. In cases like these, carpool when it's possible and safe, take intercity trains and buses instead of planes, or reduce your footprint in other ways.

** Always prioritize your personal safety when choosing your road travel or public transportation options. Ensure the transportation is safe, pick reputable companies, travel during daylight hours, and be aware of opportunistic crime.

WATER—BRING A BOTTLE!

You'll be happy to hear that tap water all over England - London and more rural parts included - are totally safe to drink. This means that you can save on the absurd cost of buying bottled water while reducing your use of harmful plastics. Some



QUICK TIPS

- Take the Tube!
- Bring a bottle.
- Reduce, recycle, compost.
- Ask the locals.

schools, like University College London where I studied, will even have water bottle refill maps to show you exactly where you can fill up.

WASTE MANAGEMENT—RECYCLING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Surprisingly, London is not particularly strong when it comes to separating waste. Some flats and modern student housing may have recycling bins, but it is up to the individual to separate their recycling and then bring it down to the building-wide bins. Other flats simply don't have separate building-wide bins for recycling. Coming from New York—where recycling is separated into two subcategories—and Toronto—where compost is an additional category—I was shocked to find that recycling wasn't as rampant and that composting doesn't exist unless you live in a house with a garden. As such, it's important to be mindful of the products you buy and the waste they generate, and to take the initiative to separate your waste.

I also recommend bringing a reusable shopping bag whenever you buy groceries. In London, plastic bags will cost you extra, similar to Cambridge and other US cities.

FINALLY—ASK LOCALS!

No matter where you're located, the best way to find out how to live more sustainably abroad is by asking the locals. What do they think of climate change? What is the best way to save on transportation? Do locals compost food scraps? Are there local cafes that take reusable mugs? Ask your professors, classmates, flatmates and friends about how they incorporate green actions in their lives. Plus, it's a great way to better understand the local people, values and customs.

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