

Hansel Henson's London Guide

INTA - 1 May - 6 May 2026 · ExCeL London

Welcome to London! We are excited to welcome so many of our IP colleagues to London for INTA 2026. To help you settle in (especially if it's your first time!), we've put together a quick, no-nonsense guide to the city, with our local tips for getting around, eating well, and enjoying London.

TRAVEL

Getting to ExCeL London

Take the Tube: The quickest and cheapest way to reach ExCeL London is to take the Elizabeth Line to **Custom House**, on the Abbey Wood branch. Or, take the DLR there from Tower Gateway or Bank (with a change), on the Beckton branch. Step-free access from train to street.

We don't recommend getting a **Taxi** to ExCeL London. It is a long way, and likely to be an expensive way to sit in traffic.

Airports

- **Heathrow (LHR):** Elizabeth Line or Heathrow Express to Paddington (15-30 mins).

Locals' Tip: More Elizabeth Line trains go from the **Terminal 2 & 3** station. If you're at Terminal 4 or 5, jump on the shuttle or a Heathrow Express train for one stop to the Terminal 2 & 3 station, then change to an Elizabeth Line train.

- **Gatwick (LGW):** Gatwick Express to Victoria (30 mins) or Thameslink stopping at London

Bridge, London Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon and St Pancras International.

- **Stansted (STN):** Stansted Express to Liverpool Street Station.
- **London City (LCY):** Closest airport; DLR to Bank / Tower Gateway.
- **Luton (LTN):** Shuttle, then train to St Pancras International.
- **Eurostar:** To St Pancras International.



Tube & Elizabeth Line

The fastest way to get around Central London is by the Tube, DLR and Elizabeth Line. A map can be found here: [Tube & Elizabeth Line Map](#).

Tap-to-pay bank cards work on Tube/bus.



Taxis

Traffic in London can be heavy, and taxis are not cheap, so you might want to think twice.

Black cabs can be hailed from the street. They are only available if they have an illuminated yellow TAXI sign. You can use your bank card to pay. Black cabs are licensed and can use bus lanes.

There are plenty of Uber & Bolt drivers, especially in Central London.



Walking

London is a very flat city and if the weather is nice, it is a great way to see the city. It's often quicker for short distances.



Cycling

If you are a confident cyclist, cycling is a good option. There are various options: [Santander Cycles](#), [Lime Bikes](#), [Forest](#). Try to take a cycle path if you can: [maps](#).



WHERE TO STAY

There is very little around ExCeL London except for a few hotels and a handful of coffee shops/restaurants. It is similar to INTA Barcelona.

Instead, we recommend staying in Central London and using the Elizabeth Line to travel to ExCeL London:

- **Luxury:** Mayfair, Marylebone, Covent Garden, Soho.
- **Mid-range:** Bloomsbury, Southbank, Waterloo, Shoreditch.
- **Good value:** King's Cross, Paddington, Stratford.
- **Airbnb:** Good options across London.

Locals' Tip: Look for hotels near an Elizabeth Line station (Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street).

EATING & DRINKING

London has a huge array of eating and drinking options to suit all tastes and budgets. It has one of the most exciting food scenes in the world. For inspiration, check out [Time Out](#) or [Vittles](#).

Top areas to look for restaurants are: Soho, Covent Garden, Shoreditch, King's Cross, Southbank, Marylebone, Fitzrovia. We suggest picking an area you'd like to visit, and there is likely to be a great place to eat nearby.

You'll find much better coffee at independent coffee shops than the chains. There are lots of different drinking options from the great British pub, wine bars, unusual cocktail bars like Mr Fogg's and Cahoots, to [cocktail bars with a view](#).

IF YOU ONLY DO 3 THINGS

- **Visit a museum or gallery:** Most London museums and galleries are free. *The British*

Museum has world cultures and antiquities. Or go to South Kensington and visit *The Victoria and Albert Museum, Science Museum or Natural History Museum*. *The National Gallery* holds European masterpieces in Trafalgar Square. *Tate Modern* has international modern and contemporary art. *The Royal Academy of Arts* holds exhibitions and historic architecture.

- **Go for a wander through a park:** *Hyde Park, St James's Park, Regent's Park* in Central London, or *Kew Gardens*, around 45 minutes from Central.

- **Go for a whistle-stop tour of the monuments:** *The Tower of London* – history, armoury and the Crown Jewels. *Westminster Abbey* – royal coronations and memorials. *St Paul's Cathedral* – iconic dome and panoramic views from the Whispering Gallery. Or just walk along the *South Bank* at sunset, and take in *Big Ben* and the *London Eye*.

TOP TIPS

- Cluster meetings by area.
- Download [Citymapper](#) and map your journeys.
- INTA takes place during a bank holiday weekend, and we *love* doing engineering work over these weekends. So, check the [TfL](#) website for status updates.
- London is generally safe, but do be aware of pickpockets and openly walking around with your phone out.
- If you have an early morning flight and need a reliable bookable taxi, [Addison Lee](#) is your best option.
- Avoid travelling around rush hour if possible.
- Stand on the right on Tube escalators.
- Tap a contactless bank card or phone to travel (no need to buy a ticket or Oyster card).
- 10-12.5% tip at restaurants is typical. This is normally already included on your bill.
- Most importantly: pack an umbrella!

