

LONDON LIVING

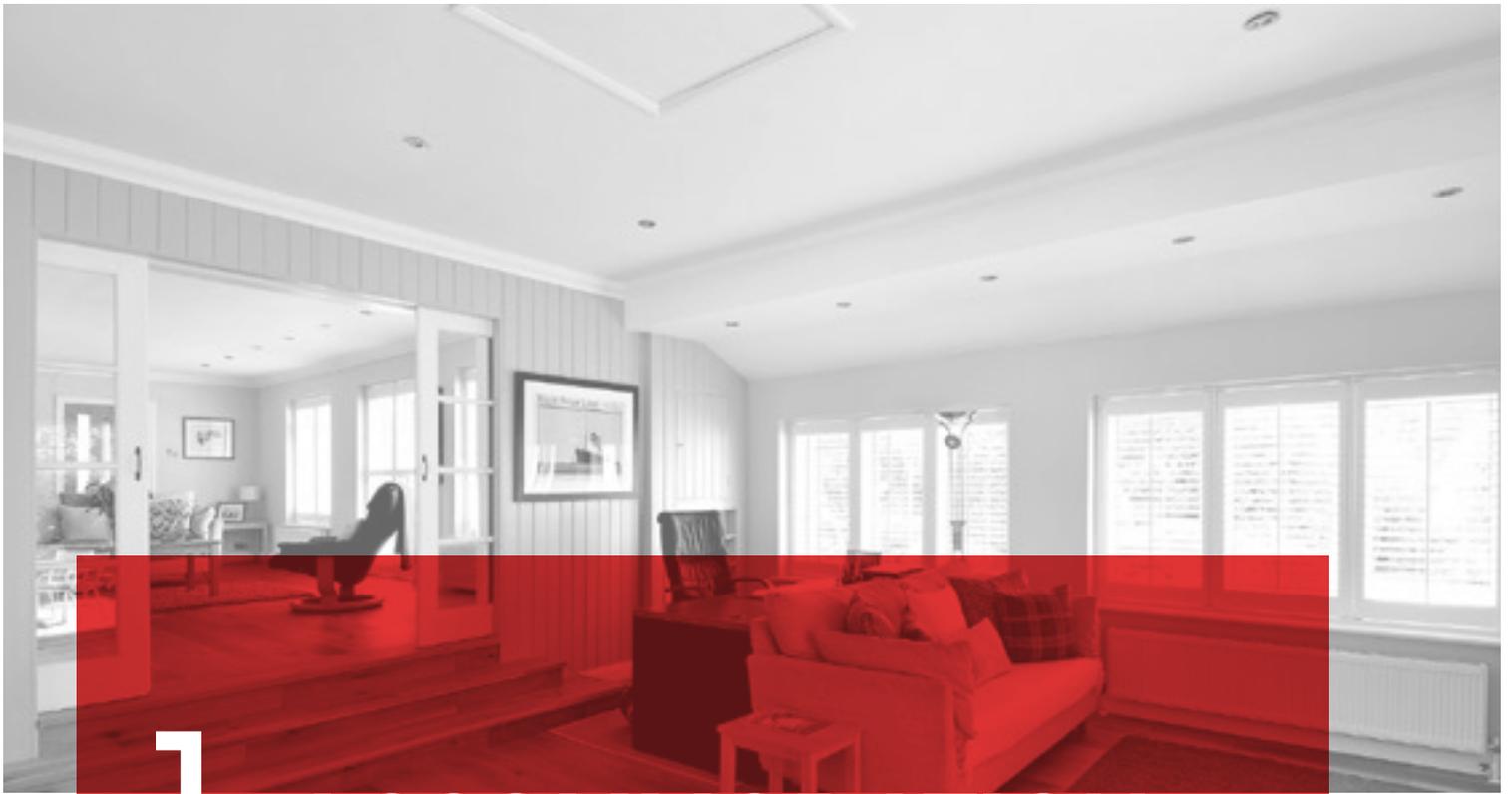
An Insider's Guide to Relocating
to London





A free guide to help new Londoners and expats getting settled in the capital. This e-book explores all of the practical issues you may face when moving to a new country and it answers the questions that many others have asked before you. Read on and learn about the London rental market, how to set up all basics and utilities, how to find a school for your child, leisure centres, groceries, taxes – and a lot more. The guide includes actionable insights and direct links to official websites that can help you along the way.

The e-book is published one chapter at a time and here you will find the first chapter; Accommodation. The next chapter, Utilities and Basics will be published shortly.



1. ACCOMMODATION

A Guide for the Bold and the Brave

This guide has been designed to help you wrap your head around the basics of the London rental market, what to expect and how to avoid any disappointments. So, whether you're locked and loaded with a moving date or still weighing up your options; we hope to comfortably guide you through the necessities of relocating to one of the planet's most kinetic and culturally abundant cities.

London's property market is exceptionally buoyant and isn't showing signs of slowing.

As its popularity as an international home-from-home increases; so do the quality of properties available and the competition to snap them up.

But do not be put off. The feeling of setting up home in your favourite corner of London Town will far outweigh the preliminary efforts required to bag your dream pad. Follow our guide to make the most of your search and stay several steps ahead of the game.



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1.1 Need vs Want

The best place to start to find your ideal new home is to begin with an idea of what that property might look like. Do you need a garden? Does the landlord accept pets? You'll find that your preferences begin to take the form of flexible compromises and inflexible deal-breakers. This list will prove invaluable in narrowing down a huge catalogue of potential property matches.

While a nearby underground station is a helpful benefit, London's exceedingly efficient bus network makes commuting possible and even pleasant from many areas not supported by the tube network. [Transport for London](#) and [National Rail Enquiries](#) will be able to offer accurate commuter alternatives across London.

“
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Initial Considerations

Competition

With 11 eager tenants to every available rental in London, the competition to land your ideal apartment can be fierce. Properties can come and go within 24 hours and so we'd recommend putting yourself in the best informed position. Register for instant alerts from online property management sites and call, rather than email to declare initial interest.

Be Prepared

You want to appear as the best potential tenant to any potential landlord and the best way to do this is by having your papers in order. Having pre-written references from previous landlords (regardless of the country) will save time and demonstrate your enthusiasm. The landlord or agent may also wish to see proof of your identity, immigration status, employment status and credit history. The more of these documents you can prepare in advance, the more attractive your offer will appear.

Furnished vs Unfurnished

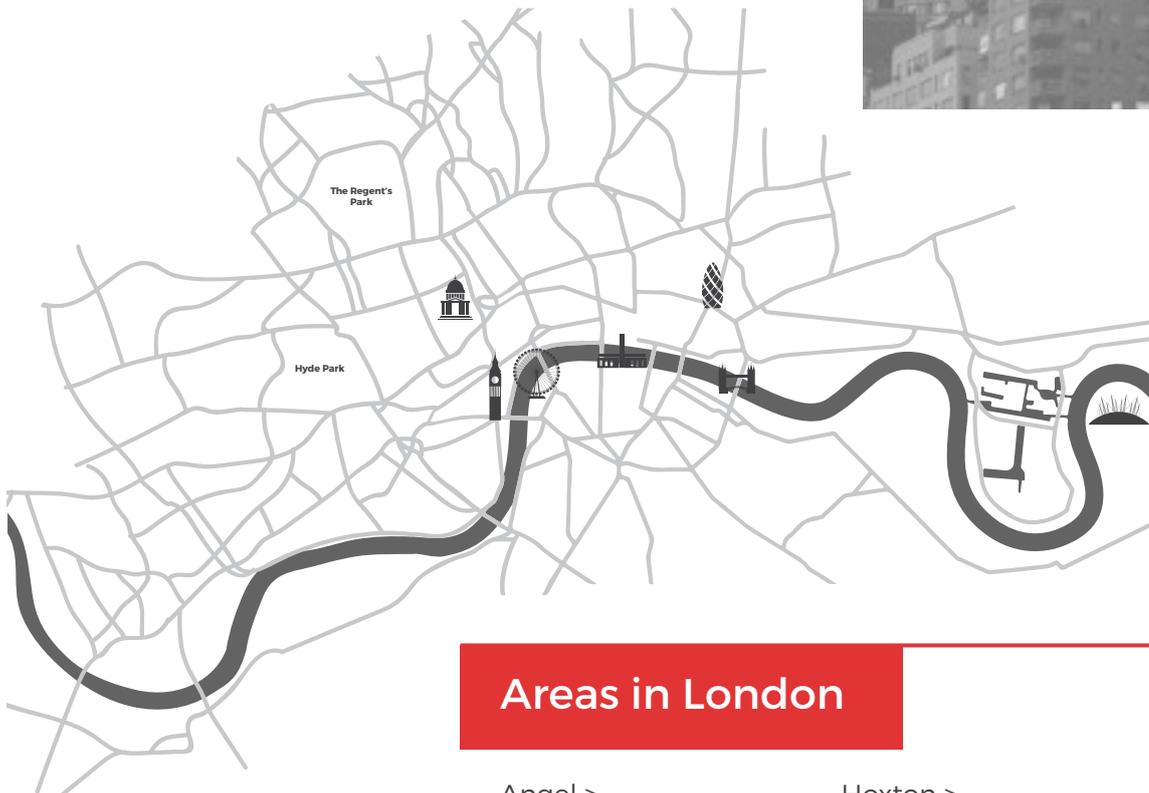
Whether a landlord lets his property unfurnished, part furnished or fully furnished is completely at their discretion. Of course this may impact the desirability of the property in your eyes, as you may have a crate full of homewares ready to move in, or you may need to wait a month for your belongings to arrive. This can be negotiated but any changes may have an effect on the rental price and terms of the security deposit. If you're unsure about what is or isn't included - just ask! The more questions you ask when viewing a property, the more comfortable you'll feel when signing any contractual agreements.

1.2 Where to Look

Neighbourhoods

From colourful street markets to high-shine high-rises, London's neighbourhoods vary wildly in style, accessibility and aesthetic.

We strongly recommend spending some serious time thinking about whether a midnight bagel or a 7am flat white are local necessities. Many boroughs have huge green spaces and permanent cultural fixtures while others have insatiable night life and world-class fine dining. Use our [Area Guide](#) to explore and find your ideal area.



Areas in London

- Angel >
- Camden >
- Canary Wharf >
- Chelsea >
- City of London >
- Covent Garden >
- Fitzrovia >
- Hoxton >
- Hyde Park >
- Islington >
- Kensington >
- Limehouse >
- London Bridge >
- Marylebone >
- Mayfair >
- Monument >
- Old Street >
- Shoreditch >
- South Bank >
- Vauxhall >

Agents and Landlords

Almost all landlords will have an appointed estate agent whose duty it is to manage set-up of new tenants including negotiation of terms and conditions.

Another option is to register directly with estate agents, as they will work to find you a suitable property. Keep in mind that if you find a property using an online search tool, you'll need to contact the estate agent representing the landlord to view the property. These contact details will always be displayed on online search sites.

Some landlords prefer to set-up privately without the assistance of an agent, but we recommend avoiding this alternative. You will be far better protected legally should any complications arise if you have completed your set-up via an agent.



Online Search Tools

Zoopla and Rightmove are impartial lettings sites displaying up-to-the-minute availability of properties from agents all across London. They both offer instant alerts when new properties that match your criteria become available. They are also a great way to begin to build a picture of types of housing available throughout London and the associated rates.

Tip: You can visit The Mayor of London's Rent Mapper to compare regional averages.

1.3 Need to Know

Tenancy Agreement

A tenancy agreement is a contractual agreement designed to outline and protect the rights and responsibilities of both the Landlord and the tenant.

Read through your tenancy agreement carefully and do challenge any areas you may be uncomfortable with. Every professional, reputable Landlord will provide a written tenancy agreement for both parties to sign. Where there is not a written tenancy agreement, it's recommended you do not move ahead with the process.

You may find that you are expected to arrange a tenant to replace you at the end of your tenancy. Please don't let this put you off; there are always plenty of people looking for a place to live in London.

The contents of your tenancy agreement should include but are not exclusive to:

- Confirmation of sum of rent owed and sum of deposit
- Conditions around monthly rental payments and the implications of any delays
- Date at which the sum of rent may be reviewed
- Contact details of both the agent and the Landlord
- Duration of fixed term and conditions thereafter

Fixed Term

An Assured Shorthold Tenancy is the most common type in the UK. It requires a fixed term agreed by both parties as the minimum number of months that both parties will commit to. Most fixed terms are either 6 or 12 months in duration, following which the agreement becomes a Periodic Tenancy whereby either party can cancel the contract by providing a minimum 2 months' notice.

If you cannot commit to at least 6 months we would recommend seeking a Periodic Tenancy initially, as early release from your Assured Shorthold Tenancy may result in you being billed for the full duration of the contract. For short term rentals, we recommend using a Serviced Apartment to avoid any hassle with estate agents and fixed terms.



Additional Fees

In order to secure your new apartment, you should be ready to financially commit to the property. However, it's not just as simple as paying your first month's rent. Here are some other charges you will need to prepare for.

Security Deposit

A security deposit of 4-8 weeks of rent will be expected to be paid upon completion of the tenancy agreement. It is designed to cover the costs or repair to any damage caused outside of everyday wear and tear.

Your security deposit is fully refundable at the end of your tenancy but will be based on conditions detailed in your tenancy agreement. The landlord or agent will produce a detailed inventory when you move in of any existing imperfections to finishes or furniture.

The best way to protect your security deposit is to be present while the inspection is taking place and take any pictures of existing flaws for your own records.

It is a legal requirement that your security deposit is protected by a government-backed [Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme](#). Details should be explicit in your tenancy agreement and you should not commit to any tenancy where this is not in place.

Utilities

There may be fees charged by your utility providers to update their services and transfer contracts. You will also be responsible for making contact with your Local Authority and arranging payments towards your council tax.

Agent Fees

The estate agent will usually charge a percentage of the rental cost plus admin and referencing charges. This could total between £100-600.

Maintenance

Some properties that have substantial communal areas may charge an additional maintenance fee for the ongoing upkeep of these areas. You should ask about this before signing the tenancy agreement.



1.4 Good to Know

International Storage & Haulage

There are plenty of companies that can help with packing, stacking and shipping your furniture and belongings internationally, for example [Transglobalexpress.com](https://www.transglobalexpress.com). Search tools like [Bestglobalmovers.com](https://www.bestglobalmovers.com) will serve up various no obligation quotes based on your specific needs.

We recommend that you shop around. Request quotes from around three months before you plan to travel and don't be afraid to negotiate. You put yourself in a strong position to negotiate by avoiding Fridays and public holidays.

Do be sure to check the insurance requirements of any removal company before committing to them. Your valuable items may only be insured against damage if packed in a particular way by the removal company team, and this could add to the cost. Be open and if in doubt - ask!

The 'Before You Sign on the Dotted Line' Checklist

So you've found the perfect place to call your own. Use our checklist to make sure you don't forget the important stuff:

- ... Consider the total sum of monthly outgoings in addition to rent including utilities, internet, council tax, maintenance etc
- ... When will you rent be reviewed and potentially increased?
- ... Is your tenancy extendable after the fixed term? Is there lots of interest in the property (is there room to negotiate?)
- ... Has the agent prepared a written tenancy agreement?
- ... Is your security deposit protected by a government-backed Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme?
- ... Will it come furnished / unfurnished / part furnished?



1.5 The Benefits of Serviced Apartments

Serviced Apartments are an immeasurably stress-free and flexible alternative to renting privately in London.

You can commit to as little as a week and check-out with only 24 hours' notice. Management of the legal and contractual aspects are completely taken care of and no deposit or referencing fees are required.



accommodation	living space	monthly cost pp
 hotel 30 days stay	250-300 sq.ft average hotel room	
 serviced apartment 30 days stay	700-800 sq.ft 2 bed contemporary apartment	

Apartments are fully furnished; down to linens and crockery. They are a fully assembled home-from-home ready for living from the moment you arrive. Further, when you are staying in a Serviced Apartment you get professional cleaning once a week and have a flexible contract that can reflect your needs.

Serviced Apartments are a supremely simple way to stay in London for short-term project work or to test out a particular neighbourhood before taking the long-term plunge.

[Click here](#) to see current Serviced Apartments available in our favourite London neighbourhoods.

Get a quote today



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We are thesqua.re, a Serviced Apartments provider based in London. We offer Serviced Apartments to corporate clients and people who are relocating to London in need of a temporary place to stay.

With our extensive experience in this industry, we have realised that many expats ask the same questions about how to get settled in the city. For your convenience we have therefore created this insider's guide to navigating the market before, during and after your move to London.

We hope you will benefit from this guide and enjoy your stay in London.

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