



A DAY OUT IN LONDON FOR A FEW POUNDS

Here are some tips for keeping costs down, while enjoying a day out in London.

a) Book your rail ticket online, at least a day ahead.

Booking tickets on the day you travel is much more expensive! At the time of writing, an additional discount is available if you book online, rather than at the ticket office. Return tickets to London can be purchased for £6, or less with a Railcard (see below).

b) Travel on certain trains, chosen ahead of time.

Generally speaking, you must travel outside the rush hour. Southern Railway's excellent website (<http://www.southernrailway.com>) tells you how much it costs to travel on each train. Only a limited number of tickets are sold at each price, so for the best choice of times, you should book several days ahead. At the time of writing, you can buy a return ticket for £6 (£4 with a Railcard), leaving Bosham on any train from 9:05am onwards, and return on the 5:02pm or 9:32pm from Victoria. If you travel on a different train from the one on which you are booked, you might be asked to get off, or to pay the full fare!

c) Use a Railcard.

Substantial savings are available if you use a Railcard (Network, 16-25, Family and Friends, or Senior). These cost £25 or £26, and last a full year (<http://www.railcard.co.uk>)

d) Use an Oyster card, or (if you have one) a free bus pass.

London buses are free if you are a senior and have a bus pass. To use the buses without a pass, or to use the “Tube”, get an Oyster Card, for a refundable £3 deposit. You can order online (<http://oyster.tfl.gov.uk>) and have it sent by mail, or get the card from a station or newsagent in London. You “charge it up” with money, and then “swipe” it as you pass through each ticket barrier. Do not buy single tickets from station to station—they cost a lot (typically £3 or £4 per journey). Typically, a whole day of travelling around central London with an Oyster Card costs less than £6. The money on the card never expires. Each person travelling needs their own Oyster Card.

e) Bring from home everything you want to eat or drink.

You can rapidly “blow” your budget if you have to buy drinks or a meal in London—unless, of course, that is one of the pleasures of your day out!

f) Restrict your entertainment to “free” venues, such as most museums and art galleries.

There are plenty of free things to see and do in London (my favourite—the Science Museum). Most of them close between 5 & 6pm, so don't book a very late train home!

So—there it is! You have to work at it, but it is perfectly feasible to have an extremely enjoyable day out in London—and to spend very little!