

Budgeting and Spending during the Maymester

OK, first thing to not...London is expensive. But there are many ways to stretch your budget, especially for meals. Some suggestions from past experience, broken down by the four sections of our trip (which we've been referring to as London 1, Dublin, Scotland, and London 2)

London 1:

1. Continental Breakfast at the Days Inn, Hyde Park (May 7-17). Don't skip breakfast! Our hotel's breakfast will include basics like cereal, yogurt, fruit, cold cuts and cheese, bread for toast and croissants, etc. In the past, students have grabbed a banana or orange on their way out of the door or made a sandwich to go. Will there likely be a sign somewhere saying "no food outside dining room"? Probably. But if you are polite and don't over-indulge, the hotel accepts this as a common practice.
2. We are located within quick walking distance of a few grocery stores and food markets, including Sainsbury and M&S Simply Food. Keep some snacks in your room that don't need refrigeration like nut butter (and grab a few packets of jam from breakfast for a quick PB&J). Use the teapot in your room to heat water for a noodle or soup mix.
3. The infamous Tesco Lunch Meal Deal! Tesco and Tesco Express are like the British Kroger, and they offer easy, take away lunches of sandwiches, crisps (chips), and a drink for very reasonable prices. Available across the UK and Ireland.
4. Keep in mind these included meals that Vanderbilt will be providing during this portion of the trip and budget appropriately:
 - a. May 7, first night welcome dinner
 - b. May 9, afternoon tea (very filling, make this your late lunch/early dinner)
 - c. May 10, picnic lunch at Hampton Court
5. Alcohol and Clubs. You will all be of legal drinking age in the UK and Ireland, but remember that drinks can be pricey, as can the covers for night clubs. This is where many a UKinMayer has broken their budget. And we're still in London 1, pace yourself.

Dublin:

1. Full Breakfast at Jacob's Inn, purchased in advance for everyone. Not just Continental, but hot Irish breakfast buffet with bacon, sausage, scrambled and fried eggs, porridge, bread, fruit, etc. Fill up! And grab a banana or apple for later.
2. Happy hostel living, we have access to a kitchen here, including a microwave for heating up instant meals, etc.!
3. Keep in mind these included meals that Vanderbilt will be providing during this portion of the trip and budget appropriately:
 - a. May 17, travel lunch between London and Holyhead
 - b. May 19, amazing dinner at Johnnie Fox's Pub, [menu](#) here (if you like mussels, I highly recommend)
 - c. May 20, bag lunch for day tour to Cliffs of Mohr.
 - d. May 21, group dinner after the Storytelling performance, either at the Stag's Head pub or (ideally) made by Drs. C & E at Jacob's Inn.

Scotland (Glasgow/Edinburgh)

1. Continental Breakfast at Yotel Glasgow, purchased in advance for everyone, with both hot and cold items (I'm not exactly sure what that means, but it suggests a good variety).
2. No microwave in rooms, but the website mentions the possibility of access to one by asking at the front desk.
4. Keep in mind these included meals that Vanderbilt will be providing during this portion of the trip and budget appropriately:
 - a. May 22, pre-paid lunch on the ferry from Belfast to Scotland, [menu](#) here.
 - b. May 24, meat or vegetarian pie and a pint included at Oran Mor.

London 2:

1. Full English breakfast at St. Giles, purchased in advance for everyone. If you haven't had beans for breakfast yet, here's your chance.
2. Same advice about visiting local groceries and finding inexpensive meal options, although we won't be staying as long as we did during London 1.
3. Keep in mind these included meals that Vanderbilt will be providing during this portion of the trip and budget appropriately:
 - a. May 30, "Three course bespoke dinner menu" included with our tickets for *Murder Express*, including vegetarian option.
 - b. June 1, final farewell dinner.

General tips:

- When I took a similar UK trip in 1991 (I'm old) I divided cash into different envelopes, so I always knew how much I still had left to spend, whether I needed to say "no" to drinks at the pub after a show or give myself permission to splurge. No one uses cash anymore, so a few suggestions...
 - Keep a running tally of your purchases by saving your receipts and calculating them each evening.
 - Keep a running tally on your phone through a fancy app, like TravelSpend (if you are chained to Apple products like me) or one of [these](#) options.
 - Don't forget to include your Venmo purchases to friends who paid for meals their their card.
- The UK and Ireland offer many cultural experiences for FREE, especially national museums. Hooray for investing in civic education and social capital! Check out this list of "[Free Things to Do in London](#)" published by the Londonist. Or this list from Lonely Planet on "[19 Free Things to Do in Dublin](#)." Or Conté Nast's "[16 of the Best Free Things to Do in Glasgow](#)" and TimeOut's "[10 Free Things to Do in Edinburgh](#)."