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Introduction

You're serving an academic sentence of 10 to 15 years, time spent sitting in one classroom or the other, listening to Dr. Monotone or Professor Drivel inform you about trickle-down economics or the migratory nature of swallows or life on Mars or whatever. Sometimes the walls seem like they're going to close in on you. Even if you are blessed with the best and brightest of teachers — and we know *our* students are! — education can fail to excite.

What you need is time off for good behavior. A stint abroad will put the luster back in learning. That's because study abroad is — or at least *ought to be* — a vastly different educational experience. You are in another country, and an inexhaustible supply of cultural resources can irrigate the seeds of learning.

In the first half of this book, we're going to convince you that your education won't be complete unless you go to London for a summer, semester, year, or any

chunk you can carve time into. We'll help you figure out how to make your dream a reality. We'll help you prepare for your study sojourn by guiding you as you choose a program, figure out how you're going to pay for it, and go about informing yourself about the sceptered isle. We'll tell you what to do once you get off the plane — or whatever other form of transportation brought you to England — and help you orient yourself to your new environment.

The second half of the book is dedicated to insider tips on having a *fun* and multifaceted educational experience in London. We look at London's offerings subject by subject, pointing out the enriching experiences, the wondrous walks, the out-of-the-way places that can bring to life the fields you are studying or are otherwise interested in. We believe learning can be an adventure, and we put great stock in exploration and self-discovery. This book doesn't tell you that this place or that is the best, the number one, the see-at-all-costs site. We don't bother rating sites with x number of stars or miniature Tower Bridge icons or Shakespeare busts. (You'll find a different kind of bust on page 3 in London's biggest-selling daily newspaper, *The Sun*!) What's four stars to us may be only two to you. Instead, this book aims to whet your appetite for creating a unique, individualized London experience that goes far beyond that of the casual visitor. We help you figure out how to absorb the essence of London — *your* London — not a tour guide's or your teacher's. Turn the page and fasten your seatbelt. You're on your way to London!