



**BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL**

# How to make Friends In London



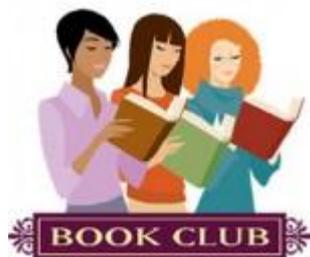
London is not always an easy place to make new friends. Londoners are not known for being particularly friendly (it's one of the only cities where people actively avoid eye contact on public transport!). But on the other hand, it is one of the most multi-cultural cities in the world and with around 8 million people living in London, you are sure to make friends!



Whether you are new to the city or have lived here for a while (and are getting bored of your current friends!), there are many ways to find new friends in London:

## Join a group

A great way to meet friends is to join a group or organisation. Find a group which focuses on a particular hobby of yours and you will immediately have something in common with everyone else in the group which will make it a lot easier to build connections and friendships.



There are groups for practically everything in London – book clubs are very popular, as well as groups focussing on art, music, religion, photography, walking, knitting, theatre and many many more!

The easiest way to find groups in your area is online but you can also look in local newspapers and shop windows. Remember to be cautious though – make sure the group is meeting in a public area and always tell someone where you are going.

## Join a sports club

You don't have to be good at sports to join a sports club – there are plenty of amateur groups where you can meet people and get fit at the same time!

You could join a sports team (e.g. a football team that meet every week for training and matches), a beginners group (have you ever wanted to play squash? Now's the time to learn!) or you could find a



fitness class at a local gym and go regularly. It might be difficult to speak to people in the class at first but after you have been for a couple of weeks and seen the same faces, it will be easier to strike up a conversation and you could even go for a post workout coffee (or treat yourself to dessert!).

## Enrol onto a course



Enrolling onto a course is a great way to make friends as you will often be encouraged to speak to the other students while you are in the class. There are courses for almost anything in London – have you ever wanted to learn how to

play an instrument, learn a new language or learn how to dance, sing or cook? You're sure to find a class to suit you.

If you are a non-native speaker, why not join an English language course while you are in London? There are many English schools in London, for example [Bloomsbury International](#), where you will meet other students from all around the world who also want to make friends and you will be able to socialise in your classes as well as on [social activities](#) organised by the school.

## Speed dating

If you are single, speed dating is a great way to make new friends. There are many speed dating events taking place in the city almost every night!

At an event, you will usually sit at a small table opposite someone else. You will have approximately 5 minutes to speak to each other and then one of you will need to move to the next table. Five minutes may not seem like a long period of time but it's usually long enough to know if you have a connection with someone and want to meet them again. You will also get a chance to speak to at least 20 different people.

You may not find love at the event but you might end up speaking to someone who you get along well with, either at the table or speaking to people at the end of the event.



## Volunteering



There are many ways to volunteer in London where you can make friends and feel like you are helping people at the same time. You could volunteer in a charity shop, at a call centre, in an animal shelter, at a sports event, in a museum and many other places.

Another way to meet people is by finding a paid job in London, for example in a restaurant, café or bar. Not only will you meet other staff members, but you will also meet and chat to many customers every day.

## Join Meetup

Meetup is a fantastic way to meet people with the same interests as you. It is basically a huge network of groups which have been organised by local people and focus on an endless number of activities and hobbies, from language exchange and interesting talks to pub crawls and salsa dancing!



Visit [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) and you will be able to search for and join groups in your area. You will then receive messages informing you when the group is going to meet up and you can decide whether or not to join them. The great thing about these groups is that everyone is in the same boat as you – they all want to meet people with the same interests.

## Be brave



The most important thing about making new friends is to be brave and don't be scared to make the first step. Whether you are in a class, in a bar, in the canteen at work or on public transport, there is no harm in starting a conversation with someone and seeing if they are happy to chat to you. A great way to start up a conversation is by giving someone a compliment –

“I love your shoes! Where did you buy them?” or “Your hair looks really shiny, which shampoo do you use?”. You will soon be able to tell if the person wants to chat to you or not by their reaction, and if they want to be left alone, at least you have made someone feel good about themselves!

# Have fun with English!

Can you match these friendship words/phrases on the left with their meanings on the right?:

a mate or pal	a person that you have met but don't know well
an acquaintance	to stay at a person's house
a penfriend	a person you work with
a colleague	to argue with someone and stop being friends with them
to hang out	a person you write letters to but you have never met
to crash at	two people are always together
to be attached at the hip	informal way to say 'friend'
to fall out	to spend time with your friends not doing anything in particular

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*If you want to make friends in London, please join [Bloomsbury International](#), a quality English school in central London.*

*We offer interactive classes and a wide range of social activities so you are sure to make friends!!*

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## ANSWERS

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