

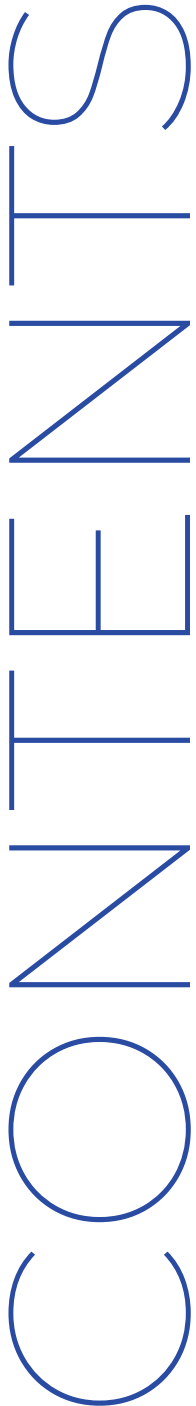


TROPICAL THAMES COMMISSION

Welcome Guide

2023/24

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Brazil at Oxford

MESSAGE FROM THE OUBS TEAM

We are the Commission Tropical Thames, the newly elected committee of the Oxford University Brazilian Society (OUBS), and we're absolutely thrilled to welcome you on this exhilarating academic and cultural journey for the upcoming year.

We recognize that starting a new chapter at Oxford can be awe-inspiring and perhaps a bit daunting. That's why we've painstakingly curated this comprehensive welcome guide, aiming not just to ease your transition but also to introduce you to the broad spectrum of opportunities and experiences that await you here.

We're not just a society; we're a dynamic platform engineered to elevate and empower the Brazilian community at Oxford. With great enthusiasm, we eagerly await the opportunity to include you in our mission, linking Brazil and Oxford through an array of limitless possibilities and opportunities.



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The Oxford University Brazilian Society (OUBS) is a Student Social Club recognised by the University of Oxford.

Our goals:

- Support the Brazilians at the University of Oxford
- Publicise research developed by Brazilian students and research on Brazilian issues developed in the University;
- Publicise the University of Oxford in Brazil and attract new students;
- Publicise Brazilian issues as potential objects of study and investigation in the University of Oxford;
- Foster cooperation and engagement between research groups in Brazil and research groups at the University of Oxford.



Just as the River Thames flows through Oxford, bringing together diverse parts of the city, the OUBS Commission Tropical Thames aims to flow through cultural and academic barriers. We are committed to linking Brazilian students with educational and entrepreneurial opportunities, establishing lasting relationships with other societies, and seamlessly integrating Brazil's vibrant culture into Oxford's academic canvas.

Mission

Through fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation, we aim to elevate Brazilian students and positively impact Oxford's academic environment.

Vision

We are cultivating a community where Brazilian students can flourish, bring meaningful contributions, and leave a sustainable legacy in both Oxford and the broader global community.



Values

- *Unity*: Bridging gaps within the Brazilian community and fostering relationships with other cultural societies.
- *Excellence*: Setting benchmarks for academic and professional brilliance through mentorship and collaborative dialogue.
- *Innovation*: Fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurial and innovative endeavors.
- *Inclusivity*: Open arms and open doors for all voices and backgrounds.
- *Cultural Celebration*: Savoring and disseminating Brazilian culture via events, partnerships, and educational initiatives.
- *Collaboration*: Engaging reciprocally with societies, clubs, and organizations that share our vision for partnership.

Goals

- *Strengthen Academic Ties*: Deepen relationships with academic programs, host insightful thematic discussions, and provide workshops on Oxford applications with a focus on Brazilian students.
- *Expand Opportunities*: Roll out a comprehensive welcome kit, amplify Brazil-centric academic events, and form ties with organizations keen on supporting Brazilian talent.
- *Promote Cultural Understanding*: Arrange events and forge alliances that celebrate Brazilian cultures, including but not limited to collaborations with Forró groups and Brazilian marketplaces.
- *Build Community Connections*: Establish durable relationships with other Brazilian societies and organizations across the UK and globally.
- *Enhance Communication*: Relaunch the term card, offer subscriptions to the Society's newsletter, and create a digital bulletin board to spotlight Brazilian initiatives within Oxford.

ARRIVING IN OXFORD

The easiest way to arrive in Oxford is through public transport. There are several options depending on where you are coming from.

01

Travelling from Gatwick

There are two ways to travel from Gatwick.

1. One is the Airline bus, which goes straight from Gatwick to Oxford – you can get tickets on [the airline](#) website. The journey takes between 2:30-3hrs and it costs £30. We recommend booking in advance to make sure you get a seat!
2. You can also travel by train by booking a train using the Trainline website. You can choose several routes. We would recommend this only if you have less luggage or if you strongly prefer trains over buses.

02

Travelling from Heathrow

As it is the case from Gatwick, there are two ways to travel from Heathrow.

1. The Airline bus, which goes straight from Heathrow airport to Oxford and – you can get tickets on [the airline](#) website. The journey takes between 1:30-2hrs and it costs £25. Once again, book in advance!
2. You can also travel by train by booking a train using the [Trainline](#) website (they also have an app!). From Heathrow, you can now also use the Elizabeth line on the Underground, travel all the way to Reading and then change to Oxford. You can choose other routes too, and the Trainline website will give you alternatives. This might be faster than the bus, but remember you have to carry your luggage yourself!

03

Travelling From London

There are two ways to travel from London.

1. You can get trains from either Paddington or Marylebone stations – usually the ones from Paddington are quicker! Once again, the [Trainline](#) website/app is handy.

You can also travel using the bus through the Oxford Tube - here is the [website](#) for the tickets and to see the bus stops (central ones are Marble Arch and Victoria Station, but there are others in London).

TRANSPORT INSIDE OXFORD

Bike

This is the easiest and cheapest way to move around Oxford. You can easily find used bikes (good and cheap) on websites such as Gumtree or Facebook Marketplace, or if you are an avid biker, there are several bike stores in town where you can get a new one.

Oxford is very cycling friendly, but be careful and make sure to get a helmet/high visibility jacket/vest and lights (if you don't use lights you can be fined!) - if you come to Fresher's Fair, you can often get bike lights for free.

Another important reminder is to have a **good bike lock** and make sure to **always lock your bike properly** otherwise your bike will be stolen!

Bike buying and repair; there are many bike shops in Oxford, so this is a nonexhaustive list, but you can try:

- Walton Street Cycles (Jericho)
- Handle bar/Bikezone (City Centre)
- Summertown cycles (Summertown)
- Reg Taylor Cycles (Cowley)
- Broken Spoke Bike Co-op (City Centre)
- The Oxford Bicycle Company (Cowley)

You can also find a list of free bike tyre pumps [here](#) (or, sometimes, with your college's porter!) and a list of cycling paths [here](#)!

OxfordBus/Stagecoach

You can use the OxfordBus app to buy tickets, but the buses also take cash and contactless (except Wise! Look at the following section). You can figure out also bus routes and bus stops on the app, or using Google Maps.

If you want to use the bus regularly, it is good to buy a bus card at one of the OxfordBus stores in town or get a bundle of trips (weekly, monthly etc.) on the app. Make sure to check which ones allow you to also use Stagecoach buses.

Taxi

Royal Cars or 001 Taxis have apps and phone numbers you can use. They are a little cheaper than the black cabs, but they can get busy during rush hour and popular times (e.g. Friday night).

You can also get black cabs on the Gloucester Green coach station area and outside the Oxford train station. All of these options take both cash and card!

NHS

The NHS is the public health system used by everyone in the UK. If you have come with a student or work visa, you probably paid a fee and is entitled to use this system.

01

Once you arrive,

don't forget to register with a Surgery/GP (General Practice) - this is your "doctor's office" - it will be your main point of contact with the NHS system and who you will call for any appointments or issues.

- If you are a University of Oxford student: your college will instruct you on how to register with the surgery. In most colleges, it is mandatory to register with the surgery they choose. Colleges might also provide on-site nurses for simpler issues and questions.
- If you are not a student: find a Surgery/GP on the NHS website that is closer to your home. Surgeries will only accept patients living close to their location and each one has a different process for registering (check their website or call). In Oxford city centre, we recommend the 19 Beaumont St GP Surgery.

02

After you register,

you will get a letter at your house or college (yes, a physical letter, on paper) with your **NHS NUMBER**. **Save this**, as it will be needed for all NHS appointments and access online!

03

Additional Information

- One good advice for your health is to take care of your level of Vitamin D, especially during the winter in the UK, as pointed out by the NHS.

If you are travelling to Europe, you can use health insurance provided by the public system, the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC).

WELFARE

There are many welfare resources at the University, including those in the college.

Colleges usually have a Welfare point of contact which you should meet in a college induction. They will be available to point you in the direction of resources too! You should also have a College Advisor assigned to you, and they can probably help point you in the direction of any resources you might need.

Most colleges will have Junior Deans/Sub-Deans which can be accessed through the Porters' Lodge in case of a crisis or emergency outside work hours.

If you have a medical emergency, you can also ring 999 - but please only use this for emergencies and, if you live in college accommodation, let the Porter's Lodge know if an ambulance is coming. If you are not sure whether you have an emergency, you can ring the NHS 111 service.

The university also has a big pack of welfare information which you can find [here](#).

If you have a disability and need support with that, you can access the [Disability Advisory Service](#). They will also give you support for any adjustments for examinations, deadlines etc. in case they are needed!

LIBRARIES

Libraries at Oxford are great places not only to get the books you need, but also quietly study for exams with a scenery and visit some of the oldest buildings in the city. Here you can find the complete list and [map of all universities in Oxford](#). Some colleges and libraries will provide a paper copy

The Bodleian Libraries

The University of Oxford has a system called Bodleian Libraries. Besides the online system (SOLO), it includes 30 libraries across Oxford that you can access using your "Bod Card". They are spread throughout the city and sometimes inside colleges - like the China Centre at St Hugh's College and the Japanese Library at St Antony's College. You'll also find Bodleian libraries specific to your field of study, such as the Social Sciences Library.

Online you can find the [complete list of Libraries in the Bodleian system](#) and their opening times, but we have highlighted the main ones below, that you shouldn't miss:

- Bodleian Old Library: is one of the oldest libraries in Europe. There is a lot of studying space in the lower and upper reading rooms, that go all around the building. Don't forget to visit the Divinity School with your bod card (taking up to 3 guests) inside the building and the Duke Humpfrey room for one of the oldest books you'll ever see. You can study in the Duke Humpfrey room, but food, drinks and bags are not allowed (leave them in the lockers downstairs)
- Radcliffe Camera: Oxford's post card and as beautiful inside as it is outside! It will be hard to find a spot in exam weeks. You can enter in the main square or come via an underground tunnel from the Old Bodleian, called the Gladstone Link (sounds fancy, but looks like an airport hallway)
- Taylorian Institute: on the side of the Ashmolean Museum, is small but charming. Has a beautiful old central room. Will also get crowded during exams. Come early to try and get one of the upstairs spots, by the windows.

**a tip for partners: you can [register online and pay for a Readers Card](#) as an independent researcher to be able to access the Bodleian System as well.*

LIBRARIES

College Libraries

All colleges will also have a library where you can study and get books from SOLO. Only people from the college will be able to access them, but you can ask your friends to take you studying in their college libraries sometimes.

Oxfordshire County Library

Besides the Universities' libraries, Oxford has the County Libraries spread all over the shire. These are public libraries and every Oxford resident can register with their passport and any Oxford postcode proof. Besides landing books, other activities often happen in these spaces, as you can see in the [County Council Website](#).

FINANCES

[Wise](#) is the most popular choice amongst Brazilian students to exchange money. It is reliable and has good exchange rates, plus you can use it as a digital bank account and as a debit card. However, many people had the experience of it not functioning on OxfordBus, needing to use another card for this service.

Virtually all vendors and places accept contactless payment via phone or physical cards. Cash-only stores are rare, but if you need to exchange BRL to GBP, there are exchange shops on the Cornmarket Street, near the Covered Market.

Many students use digital banks to create a bank account in the UK. Besides [Wise](#), [Revolut](#) and [Monzo](#) are also widely adopted.

- Traditional banks: Barclays, among others.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

University of Oxford Clubs and Societies are a great way to meet people with similar interests and get into the most varied activities while in Oxford, including sports, arts, hobbies, academic events, parties, etc. Some societies will be more organised than others, but it is worth looking for some that might be of your interest!

Here you can find the [complete list of all Clubs and Societies](#). A good way to know more is to come to the [Freshers Fair](#), on October 4th and 5th, where some societies present themselves in person.

The OXFORD UNIVERSITY BRAZILIAN SOCIETY is one of them! And we hope you enjoy being a part of it!

**a tip for partners: for a lot of societies, you don't have to be a student at the University of Oxford to participate in activities.*

The Oxford Union

Founded in 1823, the Oxford Union is one of Britain's oldest university unions and one of the world's most prestigious private students' societies (Wikipedia). In practice, it is a cool building and a debate club that will host internal debates and external events with very important people (from Malala to Ian McKellen). A lot of UK Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament have developed their debating skills here. Going to an Oxford Union debate is an experience in itself and we recommend going at least once while in Oxford. But how do you do that? Options are:

1. Sign up for a yearly or life membership at the beginning of the year to have access to all facilities (cool library, bar) and events (debates). It is pricey, but for some people it's worth it.
2. Ask your friends who are members to take you: If your life is already busy, chances are you won't use a membership that much. You use the facilities at the Oxford Union with a friend that is a member and even go to debates by paying a fee (around 10 pounds).

Browse the [Oxford Union website](#) for term cards and membership options.

NAMES AND EXPRESSIONS YOU SHOULD KNOW

The University has its own way of naming some particular things. Here we can highlight:

01

Bod Card

Your University of Oxford Card (and key to most things you will use at the Uni).

02

BOP

'Big Open Party' is a college event which happens frequently throughout the term.

03

Isis

The part of the river Thames that goes through Christchurch Meadow, where colleges go rowing.

04

Subfusc

Formal attire worn by students and academics on formal occasions, including matriculation, examinations and graduation.

However, if you are interested in going deep into these new concepts, we recommend taking a look at the [Oxford Glossary](#).

BRAZIL AT OXFORD

The Brazilian community at Oxford goes way beyond the university's walls. In the Oxford 2021 Census, the second most spoken language in the city was Portuguese, and considering the size of our country compared to other Portuguese-speaking countries, we can have an idea of the size of our local representation. Hence, there is a wide variety of Brazilian initiatives across the city and, for now, we've put together the following:

Capoeira em Oxford

- Classes for Adults and for Kids, different times and locations.
- Social Media
 - https://www.instagram.com/acapoeira_oxford/

Forró

- Classes and Social Dancing after.
- Location: St Giles Church Hall - 10 Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HT
- Social Media
- <https://www.facebook.com/oxfordForro>

O Brasileiro - Brazilian products shop

- Address: 176 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1UE
- Opening Hours:
- Monday to Saturday: 09:00 - 20:00
- Sundays and bank holidays: 09:00 - 17:00
- Site: <https://brasileiroonline.co.uk/>

Josi - Brazilian snack orders (coxinha, pão de queijo, etc)

Contact: +44 7801 241499

Pastel Stand at Gloucester Green

- Every Thursday's Fair

This is an ongoing list that we are continuously building, and we're eager to incorporate new initiatives as they come in. Hence, your contribution is vital in helping us maintain and showcase the diverse facets of the Brazilian community!

WELCOME TO OXFORD!



We hope to create happy memories together.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to acknowledge the contributors to this report.

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Feel free to contact us with suggestions, or questions, or if you want to volunteer!

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