Experience the Vibrant Culture of London as a Person of Colour!

Welcome to London, a city with a rich tapestry of cultures and histories that have shaped the experiences of people of colour for generations. As a person of colour, you are stepping into a vibrant community that reflects the diversity and resilience of those who have made the UK their home. From the Windrush generation to the present day, the contributions of individuals from African, Caribbean, Asian, and other backgrounds have woven an intricate fabric that colours the streets, neighbourhoods, and cultural institutions of this remarkable city. Embrace the opportunity to immerse yourself in the unique stories, traditions, and vibrant communities that have flourished throughout London. Here are some recommendations below:

New Beacon Books: 76 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London, N4 3EN - New Beacon Books is a historic bookstore in Finsbury Park, known for its extensive collection of African and Caribbean literature. It has been a hub for the community for decades, providing a space for book readings, discussions, and cultural events. Whether you’re looking for academic texts, fiction, or poetry, New Beacon Books is a must-visit. Visit their website.

Hairdresser/Barber Recommendations - If you’re in need of a hairdresser or barber, Finsbury Park, Brixton and Dalston (as well as the surrounding Hackney area in general) are worth exploring. Finsbury Park is close to Princess Elizabeth House, and you can easily reach it by bus. Brixton is another vibrant neighbourhood with a thriving Afro-Caribbean community and numerous hair salons catering to various styles and needs. Dalston (located within the borough of Hackney) is accessible via a number of bus and train routes, mainly via over ground directly to Dalston Junction. It is recommended you explore these areas and find a salon/barber that appeals to you personally; there are many to choose from - quality and price may vary from place to place as with anything.

UCL Union’s African Caribbean Society - As a student at the London Center, you have access to UCL Union and its African Caribbean Society. This society organizes events, social gatherings, and cultural activities that celebrate and promote the experiences of African and Caribbean students. It’s an excellent opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and engage in meaningful conversations. Other universities in London will also have similar societies and networks for students of colour. Explore the student unions of your host institution or nearby universities to find additional support and community. These societies often organize events, workshops, and discussions on topics related to race, culture, and identity. Learn more.

Museum of London: 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN - The Museum of London showcases the city’s rich multicultural history, including exhibits that highlight the contributions and experiences of Black individuals and communities. Explore their collections and immerse yourself in the stories that shaped London. Visit the Museum of London’s website for more information about their exhibits.

LSBU’s Black Students Mental Health Project - London South Bank University (LSBU) runs the Black Students Mental Health Project, which offers support and resources specifically tailored to the mental well-being of Black students. They provide workshops, counselling services, and a safe space to discuss mental health challenges within the Black community. Take advantage of these resources if you need support during your time in London.

The Black Cultural Archives - 1 Windrush Square, Brixton, London, SW2 1EF - The Black Cultural Archives is a valuable resource for exploring the history, heritage, and contributions of Black people in Britain. It houses a collection of artefacts, documents, and exhibitions that shed light on the diverse experiences of the Black community. It is located in Brixton, which is home to a lively and flourishing Afro-Caribbean society; you should explore this area and enjoy the culture and amenities it has to offer. Visit the Black Cultural Archives to gain a deeper understanding of Black British history. Check their website.

Key Dates

October: Black History Month - events, talks, exhibitions, and performances take place across the UK to honour and celebrate the history, achievements, and contributions of Black individuals and communities.

May: Africa Day - Africa Day commemorates the founding of the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) on May 25th, 1963. It is a day to celebrate the diverse cultures, traditions, and achievements of the African continent and its diaspora.

August: Notting Hill Carnival - Held annually during the August Bank Holiday weekend, Notting Hill Carnival is Europe's largest street festival and a celebration of Caribbean culture, music, dance, and food. It is a vibrant and joyous event that brings people together from various backgrounds.

Useful resources:

The Black Curriculum - an organization focused on promoting Black British history in the UK education system and providing resources for educators and students. Visit their website.

Black Thrive - an organization dedicated to improving the mental health and well-being of Black communities in the UK, providing resources, workshops, and support. Visit their website.

Arcadia recommends...

For a glimpse into the Black British experience and culture, we suggest the following:

- **TV** - Small Axe, Top Boy, Chewing Gum
- **Film** - Belle, Rocks, The Last Tree
- **Book** - 'Girl, Woman, Other' by Bernardine Evaristo, 'Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire' by Akala, 'Black and British: A Forgotten History' by David Olusoga

Please note that the above recommendations are a starting point, and there are many more significant dates, events, and cultural celebrations that Black people in London find important and celebrate. Explore the rich tapestry of Black culture in the city, engage with local communities, and discover the various festivals, art exhibitions, and performances that showcase the diversity and creativity of Black voices.

Enjoy your stay and make the most of this incredible opportunity for personal and academic growth!