

THE ANSWER

Skip the Gatwick Express. A regular Southern or Thameslink train is GBP 12-17 (super off-peak from GBP 9.50) to Victoria or London Bridge in 30-40 min - the Express saves ~5 min for double the money.

Tight budget, no rush? National Express coach GBP 8-15, 90-120 min to Victoria Coach Station. Book ahead online.

EVERY WAY OUT - REAL PRICES

Southern -> Victoria ***BEST FOR MOST***

GBP 12-17

35-40 min, 1-3 stops. Super off-peak from GBP 9.50. Contactless tap-in works. Platforms 15-19 at Victoria.

Thameslink -> London Bridge / St Pancras

GBP 12-16

30-45 min to London Bridge, Blackfriars, Farringdon, St Pancras. Best for north/east London - no Victoria detour.

Gatwick Express -> Victoria

GBP 24-27

30 min non-stop, from ~GBP 19 booked ahead. ~GBP 10 extra to save ~5 min - worth it only with heavy bags + Victoria hotel.

National Express coach

GBP 8-15

90-120 min to Victoria Coach Station. Cheapest seat, slowest door. Book ahead for low fares.

Black cab / Uber

GBP 70-140

Black cab GBP 95-140 metered; Uber GBP 70-120, surges late night. Only makes sense split 4 ways.

THE TRAPS - WALK PAST THESE

The 'fastest train to London' pitch

Southern trains to the same station cost half the Express and take 35-40 min vs 30. At Victoria, Express uses platforms 13/14, Southern 15-19 - wrong gateline, wrong ticket = premium fare charged.

The wrong terminal scramble

The rail station is at the SOUTH Terminal only. Landed at North? Free 2-min inter-terminal shuttle, then the same trains.

The late-night Uber surge

After the last trains (~00:30) Uber quotes jump to GBP 120-160. Night buses and 24/7 National Express cover most of the gap - or wait 30 min for the surge to pass.

Oyster zone confusion

Gatwick is outside the zones but INSIDE the contactless area - a normal tap works and charges the correct fare. Paper tickets are often pricier.

KNOW BEFORE YOU WALK

- Contactless = correct fare automatically, based on the train you actually board.
- Staying near King's Cross or east London? Thameslink direct beats any Victoria route.
- Super off-peak from GBP 9.50 outside weekday rush - check Southern's site first.
- First trains toward London ~04:30. Rail station = South Terminal.