

London Stansted Airport (STN)

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THE ANSWER

Stansted Express - 48 minutes to Liverpool Street, from GBP 9.90 booked in advance, or simply tap in and tap out with the contactless bank card that is now accepted on every train.

The station is a 2-minute walk from the main terminal, trains run up to every 15 minutes in the day, and contactless pay-as-you-go has been layered on so there is no machine queue and no paper ticket.

Tight budget? National Express coaches run 24/7 from GBP 7 booked ahead - up to every 9 minutes across the A6/A8/A9 routes to Stratford, Liverpool Street, Paddington and Victoria. Travelling as two? A Duo ticket is GBP 18.75 each way, and groups of 3-4 save up to 45%.

EVERY WAY OUT — REAL PRICES

Stansted Express train *BEST FOR MOST* from GBP 9.90

48 minutes to London Liverpool Street, stopping at Tottenham Hale (change there for the Victoria line, or for the coach routes). Up to every 15 minutes in the day, 7 days a week. Advance singles from GBP 9.90 (on sale 3 days to 6 months ahead - the cheapest buckets need roughly 3 months' notice). New: pay-as-you-go contactless on all services - touch in and out with a bank card or phone, billed through TfL; weekday morning peak 06:30-09:30 and evening peak 16:00-19:00 cost more.

National Express coach from GBP 7

24/7 from the coach station a 2-minute walk from the terminal, up to every 9 minutes across three London routes: A6 (Golders Green-Baker Street-Paddington-Victoria), A8 (Tottenham Hale-Liverpool Street-Waterloo-Victoria) and A9 (Stratford-Canary Wharf-Whitechapel-Liverpool Street). Lead fare GBP 7 with limited availability; fastest leg about 45 minutes to Tottenham Hale.

Taxi - official on-airport provider Street Cars booked quote

The contracted provider is Street Cars, with a reservation desk in the international arrivals concourse (+44 1279 211111) and exclusive pick-up/drop-off points. The airport publishes no fixed fare table - the price is quoted at booking or at the desk.

Pre-booked minicab (minicabit) quote

The airport's own partner comparison tool shows live quotes from licensed local taxi firms with ratings and journey-time estimates; 45 minutes' free waiting on airport pick-ups, pay online or to the driver.

THE TRAPS — WALK PAST THESE

Oyster cards are not valid - GBP 100 penalty fare

Stansted Express is blunt: Oyster is not accepted to or from Stansted Airport. Travel with an Oyster instead of a ticket or contactless and you are liable for a GBP 100 Penalty Fare plus the full single (reduced to GBP 50 plus the single if paid within 21 days). **Do this:** tap a contactless bank card or phone, or buy a ticket - never rely on a loaded Oyster here

Touch out or you pay the maximum fare

On contactless, an incomplete journey (forgetting to touch out, your phone dying, or tapping in on a card and out on a phone - they count as different devices) is charged the maximum fare. You must touch in and out even when the gates stand open. **Do this:** pick one card or device for the whole trip and touch out at the barrier or the freestanding reader

The railway folds up around midnight

Stansted Express from the airport starts around 05:30 (05:55 Tue-Thu) and the last departure is about 00:30. A delayed Ryanair or Wizz bank landing at 01:00 finds an empty station. **Do this:** if you land after 23:30, book the National Express coach - it runs 24/7

December 2025 deleted the ticket types old guides quote

In a fares simplification on 7 December 2025, Super Off-Peak and Saver Return tickets were withdrawn; singles are now priced at about half a return, and evening-peak windows were aligned. Blogs quoting 'any-time return GBP X' deals describe fares that no longer exist. **Do this:** re-check the live price if any page quotes an off-peak return fare for Stansted

The GBP 7 lead fare has a GBP 1.50 tail

National Express adds a GBP 1.50 booking fee unless you are logged into a My Account on their site or app - so the headline GBP 7 becomes GBP 8.50 for guest checkout. **Do this:** sign in (free) before booking the coach, or budget the fee

KNOW BEFORE YOU WALK

- The GBP 9.90 Advance fare goes on sale from 3 days out but the cheapest buckets need roughly 3 months' booking.
- Duo tickets cost GBP 18.75 per person each way when two book together; the Group Offer cuts up to 45% for 3-4 travelling as one.
- Children 5-15 get half off tickets and under-5s travel free - but contactless has no child rate, so buy paper/e-tickets for kids.
- Same card contactless rides also count toward TfL daily and Sunday caps once you reach the London zones.
- There is no through train from Stratford to the airport any more - every rail route changes at Tottenham Hale, while the A9 coach runs direct.

Advance GBP 9.90, Duo GBP 18.75, Group up to 45%, GBP 100/GBP 50 penalty, peak windows, Dec 2025 withdrawal of Super Off-Peak/Saver returns and Oyster exclusion all from Stansted Express's own fare and contactless pages; coach GBP 7 lead fare, 24/7 frequency, GBP 1.50 booking fee and route lists from National Express's official Stansted route page (fares correct May-July 2026). Exact walk-up contactless singles are not printed on those pages - expect roughly GBP 21-GBP 23 to Liverpool Street per independent fare-watchers (October 2026); booking ahead is cheaper. Street Cars prices are quoted, not published.

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