

LONDON'S CAFÉS, COFFEE SHOPS & TEAROOMS

Plus!
Special Places for
Afternoon Tea &
Breakfast/Brunch

David Hampshire

LONDON'S CAFÉS, COFFEE SHOPS & TEAROOMS

David Hampshire



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The Author

David Hampshire's career has taken him around the world and he lived and worked in many countries before taking up writing full-time in the '80s. He's the author, co-author or editor of some 25 titles, including *London for Foodies, Gourmets & Gluttons*, *London's Secret Places*, *London's Secrets: Museums & Galleries*, *London's Secrets: Parks & Gardens*, *London's Secrets: Peaceful Places* and *A Year in London*. David was born in Surrey but lived and worked in London for many years and still considers himself a Londoner. He now divides his time between London and Bath.

Readers' Guide

- ◆ **Contact details:** These include the address, telephone number and website (where applicable). You can enter the postcode to display a map of the location on Google Maps and other map sites or put the postcode into a satnav. The nearest tube or railway station, as applicable, is also listed.
- ◆ **Opening hours:** These can change at short notice, so you should confirm times by telephone or check the website before travelling. Some venues close on one or two days a week, which is indicated, and some are closed at weekends, e.g. in the City.
- ◆ **Prices:** We have not indicated prices for cafés, coffee shops and tearooms, all of which are usually reasonable (some are a bargain) and generally vary little. The exceptions are breakfast/brunch, which although good value in most places can be relatively expensive in upmarket venues, and afternoon tea, where we have included a guide price (some venues are eye-wateringly expensive).
- ◆ **Bookings:** Most places listed in this book can be visited spontaneously, although some require bookings for lunch and/or brunch. You generally always need to book for lunch or brunch in a restaurant or hotel, and bookings are almost always required for afternoon tea whatever the venue (some also have dress codes). Note, however, that some restaurants don't accept bookings and you just have to turn up and join the queue.

Café, Coffee Shop or Tearoom?

There is often very little obvious difference between cafés, coffee shops and tearooms, and many establishments manage to be a combination of all three; all do breakfast and many also offer brunch, and – not surprisingly – tearooms also serve afternoon tea. We have endeavoured to categorise venues according to their speciality, although many could have been included in a number of chapters.

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Introduction

This book is a celebration of London's ever-increasing wealth of excellent independent cafés, coffee shops and tearooms – as well as places specialising in afternoon tea, breakfast and brunch – all of which have enjoyed a renaissance in the last decade and done much to strengthen the city's position as one of the world's leading foodie destinations.



The number and variety of independent cafés in London has flourished in recent years, and if the city didn't have a café culture a few decades ago, it certainly does now. The quality and variety of food and drink served in cafés has improved beyond recognition in the past ten years, and is now on a par with (or better) than that of many restaurants – and the bill is invariably much lower. In fact, if you want to have a good lunch (or, increasingly, dinner) in London and don't want to pay a fortune, a café is often your best bet.



Coffee sales in Britain have grown rapidly in the last decade or so, as has the number of coffee shops, importers and roasteries that have sprung up around the capital. London's love affair with the bean has gone, quite literally, from strength to strength; not so many years ago it was difficult to find anything but insipid, luke-warm coffee, but now fresh bean-powered brews are everywhere, thanks in no small part to a host of expat baristas and coffee roasters from Down Under.



The British are famous for their love of a good cup of tea – which, as every native knows, cures all ills – although nowadays it's just as likely to be a delicate white, energising green, aromatic and complex oolong or a mysterious aged pu'er, as it is good ol' builder's brew. London has an



abundance of specialist tearooms, many with expert 'tearistas' (tea baristas) on hand to proffer advice, where you can enjoy fine teas in a delightful setting.

Tea is also a vital component of the quintessentially English diversion of afternoon tea. London's leading hotels – along with hundreds of restaurants, cafés and tearooms – compete to produce the most lavish and original afternoon tea, consisting of exquisite teas, divine cakes, pastries and savouries – and even cocktails and champagne!

If there's one meal that the British can claim their own, it's the cooked breakfast. This world-famous indulgence traditionally takes the form of a huge fry-up – the 'full English' – but in today's foodie London it's

just as likely to include a wealth of tasty and original dishes with influences from around the globe.



Increasingly, it has competition from its stay-a-bed cousin, brunch – a moreish marriage of breakfast and lunch – which Londoners have taken to with a passion in recent years.

With a copy of *London's Cafés, Coffee Shops & Tearooms* – featuring over 250 venues – you'll never be lost for somewhere to treat yourself to a great cup of coffee, a pot of exquisite tea or a plate of delicious food. We hope you enjoy discovering the city's burgeoning café culture as much as we did.



David Hampshire
January 2016



Sausage Muffin
Egg cheese, caramel
sauce, pine nuts &
herbs - £2.90

Root Vegetable
Party £3.90

Bread

Yeast Baking
Sauce £2.90

Baked On
Table
with Caramel
and Orange

Lemon - Mascarpone
Tart £2.90

1. Cafés

The growth of London's independent café scene over the last ten years or so has done much to reinforce the city's position as one of the world's gastronomic capitals. These days, it seems that there are cafés on every corner: no-frills traditional 'caffs' – known affectionately as 'greasy spoons' – serving honest British grub such as the full English breakfast; homely, characterful neighbourhood cafés specialising in high-quality drinks and homemade food; new wave rustic cafés serving artisan brews, with inventive menus (and wine lists) befitting a quality restaurant; and chic designer cafés that wouldn't be out of place in Paris or Rome.

This chapter features 90 of London's best independent cafés, chosen primarily for the excellence of their beverages, particularly their coffee and tea, and tasty food, which is usually made in-house. However, friendly staff, efficient service, appealing décor, free wifi, good value, a pleasing ambience and a great location all play their part in creating a must-visit café.

London may not have the abundant pavement cafés of continental Europe – or the sunshine in which to enjoy them – but it has created its own unique brand of café culture with something for everyone: traditional or contemporary, continental or Antipodean, unpretentious or sophisticated.

202 Café

This popular, elegant café, secreted away in an up-market Nicole Farhi boutique in Westbourne Grove, has simple yet classic décor, with aged wood, vintage touches and monochrome fashions. During the week it's a peaceful place to enjoy excellent morning coffee, while at weekends you're likely to have to queue for a table (there's also a small terrace, but you need to arrive early to bag a spot there).

202 serves great breakfast/brunch classics and dinner (Fri-Sat) featuring brasserie-inspired dishes at around the £13-£15 mark, such as spinach, pumpkin and ricotta lasagne, lamb burger with goat's cheese, and marinated swordfish steak with saffron and orzo salad.

202 Café, 202 Westbourne Grove, W11 2SB (020-7727 2722; www.202london.com; Notting Hill Gate tube; Mon 10am-6pm, Tue-Thu 8.30am-6pm, Fri-Sat 8.30am-10pm, Sun 10am-5pm).



Albion

One of Shoreditch's hidden gems, the Conran-owned Albion is a posh café and small deli, with an in-house bakery and cake counter. It's located within the stylish Boundary building, seating 60 inside and a further 30 outside.



The all-day breakfast menu includes a hearty 'full English', a variety of treats on toast – from bacon and kidneys to fried duck eggs – omelettes and eggs in any style, even kippers if you will. The accompanying all-day menu offers Welsh rarebit, ham and mustard sandwich, devilled kidneys, mackerel salad, sausage and mash, and fish and chips. There's also a market shop selling fresh bread, cakes, and fruit and veg.

Albion, 2-4 Boundary St, E2 7DD (020-7729 1051; <http://albioncaff.co.uk>; Shoreditch High St rail; Sun-Wed 8am-11pm, Thu-Sat 8am-1am).

Andersen & Co

In recent years Del Boy's manor of Peckham has gone from strength to strength, particularly the increasingly posh Bellenden Road, where a plethora of trendy cafés and eating places have sprung up. One of these is Andersen & Co, a licensed, family-run, café-brasserie established in 2010 and now a firm neighbourhood favourite. With a lovely bright (white and pale grey) interior and a delightful rear courtyard garden filled with plants and flowers, it's a lovely spot to spend some time.



Serving Square Mile coffee, Birchall teas and a wide range of Brick House and Blackbird Bakery breads, Andersen has an extensive breakfast/lunch menu (served until 3pm), a weekend brunch menu (9am-3pm) and Sunday lunch (12.30-3pm). It also offers a selection of homemade cakes and pastries



(try the courgette cake with crème fraîche and lemon curd), award-winning sandwiches, salads and lunch specials.

Dinner is served from Thursday to Saturday, when you can enjoy (among other things – see website) tasty Peckham burgers, panko and parmesan crumbed chicken breast, bavette steak and frites, pan fried cod, salted caramel banoffee pie, brownie and vanilla ice cream parfait, and local craft beers. Super!

Anderson & Co, 139 Bellenden Rd, SE15 4DH (020-7469 7078; www.andersonandcompany.co.uk; Peckham Rye rail; Mon-Wed 8am-5pm, Thu-Sat 8am-10.30pm, Sun 8.30am-4.30pm).



Arlo & Moe

Run by a brother and sister-in law team, Arlo & Moe is a friendly, laid-back neighbourhood café occupying a former barber shop. A firm family favourite, well-stocked with highchairs and baby-changing facilities, A&M has a retro '50s vibe with colourful Formica tables, Ercol chairs and quirky posters on the walls.

A&M serve excellent Dark Fluid coffee, imaginative lunchtime fare, and an irresistible selection of cakes and sweet treats (try the chocolate and Guinness cake). They offer a wider than average range of brunch options, including sausage rolls, sandwiches, frittata, quiche, soup of the day and specials. Try the invitingly-named 'sexy toast' – crunchy sourdough topped with cream cheese and honey, avocado and feta or homely baked beans.

Arlo & Moe, 340 Brockley Rd, SE4 2BT (07749-667207; Crofton Pak rail; Mon-Fri 8am-4.30pm, Sat 9am-4pm, Sun 10am-4pm)



Barmouth Kitchen

This small independent community café in Wandsworth is a genuine local concern, run by ten families with neighbourhood roots who know what their customers want. Barmouth Kitchen serves food and drink in a welcoming, friendly atmosphere, including excellent coffee (Union) and tea (Teapigs). Much of the food is sourced from local suppliers or made in-house, including a range of artisan breads, cakes and pastries.

Barmouth serves robust breakfasts, spoil-yourself weekend brunches, tasty lunches (including kids' meals to eat in or take away), as well as a range of home-cooked, take-away frozen meals, so that you can have a 'proper' meal without having to cook it. The café is also licensed.



Barmouth Kitchen, 2 Barmouth Rd, SW18 2DN (020-8704 4413; www.barmouthkitchen.co.uk; Wandsworth Town rail; Mon-Sat 8.30am-5.30pm, Sun 9am-1pm).

Birdie Num Nums

Established in 2013 by sisters Sevjan Melissa and Akjen Havali, Birdie Num Nums (from Peter Sellers '60s comedy film, *The Party*) is a delightful little café in New Cross. Along with the usual full English, scrambled eggs and BLTs, it serves Turkish treats with a modern twist, including a 'full Turkish' breakfast, chargrilled halloumi bruschetta and irresistible baklava, alongside more unusual flavours such as dark chocolate-infused Quorn chilli nachos. Drinks include coffee from Hackney-based Climpson, tea from local company Birchall, plus Firefly tonics, delicious hot chocolate and homemade limonata.



As if that wasn't enough, there's also live music, comedy, saucy belly dancing and cheeky burlesque nights (with a pop-up bar). What's not to like?

Birdie Num Nums, 11 Lewisham Way, SE14 6PP (020-8692 7223; <http://birdienumnums.co.uk>; New Cross rail; Tue-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 9am-5pm).

Blue Brick Café

A former Victorian dairy, the charming Blue Brick Café was reincarnated in 2010 by Daniel Hughes as a vegetarian café/bistro. The blue-tiled café has a homely interior furnished with old wooden tables and school chairs, and decorated with old bottles and vases filled with flowers.

All-day breakfast ranges from muesli to a full vegetarian English with sourdough toast. Using fresh local produce, Dan produces simple, rustic dishes, including soups and salads (try the goat's cheese with roasted peppers and Puy lentils) and tasty mains such as spring vegetable risotto and spicy chickpea stew. There are also proper desserts like spiced apple and plum crumble. Everything is fresh, delicious and terrific value.

Blue Brick Café, 14 Fellbrigg Rd, SE22 9HH (020-8299 8670; www.bluebrickcafe.com; E Dulwich rail; Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 9.30am-5pm).



Bluebelles

A beautiful café at the northern end of Portobello Road, Bluebelles is a great place to fuel up before seeking bargains in the nearby market. This rustic, homely, vintage-styled café – with its cool, shabby-chic décor and a few outside tables – is just perfect for a relaxing breakfast, brunch or light lunch.

The inviting window display heaves with home-baked (in-house) diet-busting delights – try the white chocolate, raspberry and cardamom cake – while inside there's a selection of delicious pastries, croissants (the almond ones are scrummy), tasty sandwiches, salads and soups, plus a wealth of savoury delights, such as eggs Benedict and bacon sarnies. The excellent coffee is from Caravan.

Bluebelles, 320 Portobello Rd, W10 5RU (020-8968 4572; Ladbroke Grove tube, Mon-Fri 8am-5pm, Sat-Sun 9am-5pm).



The Brew House Café

Tucked away in beautiful landscaped parkland on Hampstead Heath, the Brew House Café (managed by Searcys) is located in Grade II* listed Kenwood House, one of the most magnificent estates in London. Although there's ample seating inside this is primarily an alfresco venue, with umbrella-shaded tables spread across the delightful sheltered terrace.



There's a reasonably comprehensive breakfast menu, including a full English, while lunchtime offers a choice of hot and cold dishes. Drinks, sandwiches, cakes and pastries are served all day – and you can also enjoy (champagne) afternoon tea.

The Brew House Café, Kenwood House, Hampstead Ln, NW3 7JR (020-8348 4073; <http://searcys.co.uk/venues/kenwood-house/eat-drink>; Archway or Golders Grn tube; daily 9am to 4 or 6pm, depending on the season).

Bygga Bo

Bygga Bo (meaning 'to make a nest' in Swedish) is a real find in not-so trendy Walthamstow – a cosy Swedish café with a lovely decked courtyard garden. The décor is a comfortable mix of vintage and contemporary, with a jumble of old chairs and tables, original mirrors, brass-panelled ceiling and hair-perming heaters converted into lights.

The excellent coffee is from Climpson, served with soya or almond milk at no extra cost, while all food is made in-house using traditional recipes and organic ingredients. For breakfast you can tuck into ever-popular cinnamon buns or quinoa porridge topped with pomegranate, while lunch offers open or toasted sandwiches topped with prawns, blue cheese or addictive Swedish meatballs.

Bygga Bo, 8 Chingford Rd, E17 4PJ (020-8527 3652; www.byggabo.com; Walthamstow Central tube; Mon, Wed-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat-Sun 9am-6pm, closed Tue).



Café in the Crypt

St Martin's Café in the Crypt – *Les Routiers* Café of the Year 2012 – is a enchanting place to have a drink or meal in central London. The Crypt's beautiful 18th-century architecture (with brick-vaulted ceilings) is a feast for your eyes, while the tantalising menu ensures that your stomach isn't left out. The home-cooked food is freshly prepared on-site using ingredients from sustainable sources (where possible) and is good value; a full English breakfast costs just £7.50 and Sunday roast (lunch) is a snip at just £9.95.

Open seven days a week for breakfast through to dinner (closes 6pm on Sundays), with live jazz on Wednesday evenings.

Café in the Crypt, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Sq, WC2N 4JJ (020-7766 1158; www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/cafe-in-the-crypt; Charing Cross/Leicester Sq tube; Mon-Tue 8am-8pm, Wed 8am-10.30pm, Thu-Sat 8am-9pm, Sun 11am-6pm).



Café Laville

An Italian café bridging the canal in picturesque Little Venice, Café Laville is a lovely spot in which to enjoy everything from continental breakfast (try yogurt with honey and almonds or omelette with goat's cheese and spinach), a freshly-made sandwich or salad at lunch, or a tasty dinner of pasta, risotto or grilled fish/meat. The rustic and contemporary Italian Mediterranean food is delicious and accompanied by a selection of Italian wines.



On sunny days there are few better places to enjoy a coffee or hearty breakfast/brunch than the café's terrace overlooking the tranquil Grand Union canal. Bliss.

Café Laville, 453 Edgware Rd, W2 1HT (020-7706 2620; www.cafelaville.co.uk; Paddington tube/rail; daily 10am-10pm).

Café Moka

Owned by Mauritian cook Kevin Vanthem, Moka (named after a town in Mauritius) is a light and airy friendly neighbourhood café close to Haringay railway station, just north of Finsbury Park. The warm and rustic interior – exposed brick and lots of wood – vintage furniture, book shelves, open-plan kitchen and a tranquil walled courtyard out back (blankets are provided for inclement days) make for a homely atmosphere.

Moka offers good coffee, excellent tea (Teapigs) and luscious homemade cakes, including fantastic chocolate brownies, coffee and walnut cake and muffins. The café does lovely breakfasts and lunches too, and also sells bread from a local artisan baker to take home. Great value!

Café Moka, 5 Wightman Rd, N4 1RQ (020-8340 8664; Haringay rail; Mon-Fri 8am-5pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 9am-4pm).



Café Riva

A fixture on Borough High Street since 1966, Café Riva is certainly no greasy spoon; restyled in 2012, it occupies a spacious bright room with a huge counter bursting with scrumptious homemade food. Not surprisingly for a place that caters for Borough Market visitors and opens at 6am, Riva specialises in breakfasts, offering everything from porridge and granola to a filling farmer's English breakfast, accompanied by excellent Monmouth coffee and quality teas.



All food is prepared to order (made with market-fresh ingredients) and includes delicious ciabatta melts, tasty pasta dishes, jacket

potatoes and a choice of daily specials. Friendly staff, reasonable prices and appetising food – a winner!

Café Riva, 200 Borough High St, SE1 1JX (020-7407 0737; www.caferiva.co.uk; Borough tube; Mon-Fri 6am-4pm, Sat 8am-3pm, Sun 8am-2.30pm).

Chelsea Quarter Café

Located around ten minutes' walk from Sloane Square, the stylish licensed Chelsea Quarter Café is part of a small chain (see website). The charming CQC occupies a large corner site in this tranquil part of Chelsea, with an enticing window display of cakes and pastries concealing a large elegant interior.

The menu includes wholesome all-day breakfasts (try the delicious eggs Benedict), light lunches – homemade soups, dips and salads, sandwiches (try the moreish avocado and buffalo mozzarella baguette with sun-dried tomato and pesto), pasta dishes, plus 'chef's favourites' – as well as freshly-baked pastries, cakes and tarts. Drinks include excellent coffee and teas, fresh fruit juices and some of the best smoothies in town.

Chelsea Quarter Café, 219 King's Rd, SW3 5EJ (020-7352 3660; www.chelseaquartercafe.com; Sloane Sq tube; Mon-Sat 7.30am-8pm, Sun 8am-7pm).



Chinwag

Chinwag is an eccentric café/bistro in New Cross (opposite Goldsmiths Uni) serving good coffee and delicious burgers. You enter through an red phone box door, while inside there's exposed brickwork, a hodgepodge of old tables (including school desks), flowers in buckets, wall lights created from taps, bicycle wheel 'chandeliers' and a lovely vintage cash register. There's also a decked area out front for sunny days.

Chinwag specialises in big breakfasts (eggs, crispy hash browns, ham, sausages and fried tomatoes, although for the health conscious there are also granola, porridge, yoghurt, berries, etc.) and even bigger gourmet hamburgers (beef, lamb, chicken or veggie) served with aioli, lettuce, tomato and relish in light sesame buns – delicious! Alcohol licence, reasonable prices, friendly staff and cool tunes = café heaven.

Chinwag, 21 Lewisham Way, SE14 6PP (New Cross rail; Mon-Sat 10am-10pm, Sun 10am-5pm).



The Clerkenwell Kitchen

Serving breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea, the Clerkenwell Kitchen is a bright and airy café with a spacious courtyard terrace (but only six tables and no bookings), catering to the smart young Clerkenwell set. The exposed architectural features, white walls and industrial open kitchen are complemented by wooden floors, culinary-themed line drawings and a wood burner.



The Kitchen sources most of its produce locally and specialises in seasonal, sustainable, organic and free-range food. The changing lunch menu includes six daily specials and puddings and a choice of freshly-made sourdough sandwiches, tarts and soups, plus tempting home-baked cakes. It's also licensed and serves Fairtrade teas and coffees and organic fruit juices.

The Clerkenwell Kitchen, 27-31 Clerkenwell Close, EC1R 0AT (020-7101 9959; www.theclerkenwellkitchen.co.uk; Farringdon rail/Barbican tube; Mon-Fri 8am-5pm, closed weekends).

The Cloister Café

Located in the beautiful 15th-century cloisters of Great St Bartholomew's church, this is one of London's loveliest and most tranquil cafés. Usually open daily (except Saturday, but check) the Cloister serves excellent coffee, tea (including fresh mint tea), soft drinks, cider, house wines and (appropriately) monastic beers. There's also a selection of cakes and pastries, homemade quiche, tasty pies, cheese platters, charcuterie, hearty stews and soup. Heavenly fare indeed!

There's a fee of £4 to visit St Barts – London's oldest church and well worth a tour – but access to the café is free.

Cloister Café, St Bartholomew the Great, W Smithfield, EC1A 9DS (020-7600 0440; www.greatstbarts.com/pages/cloister_cafe/cafe.html; Barbican tube; Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm (4pm from mid-Nov to mid-Feb), Sun 9.30am-6.30pm, closed Sat).



Cooper & Wolf

A family run café-restaurant in Clapton overlooking Millfields Park, Cooper & Wolf (named after the owners' cats) occupies a lovely, bright corner building (a former glazer's shop) with huge picture windows. The café is run by friendly Swede Sara and specialises in home-cooked Swedish dishes such as meatballs, *gravlax* (cured salmon) and *inlagd sill* (pickled herring), plus a range of vegetarian options.



C&W also serve excellent coffee (Caravan) and tea (Make Tea Not War) and soft drinks, and bake their own delicious cinnamon buns (*kanelbullar*) and a selection of cakes daily. A friendly, homespun delight.

Cooper & Wolf, 145 Chatsworth Rd, E5 0LA (www.cooperandwolf.co.uk; Clapton rail; Mon-Thu 9am-5.30pm, Fri 9am-6pm, Sat-Sun 10am-6pm).