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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. He's the author, co-author or editor of over 25 titles, including *London's Secret Places*, *London's Secrets: Museums & Galleries*, *London's Secrets: Parks & Gardens*, *London's Green Walks*, *London's Village Walks* and *London's Monumental Walks*. David was born in Surrey and lived and worked in London for many years and still considers himself a Londoner. Nowadays he divides his time between London and Dorchester (Dorset).

## The Publisher

City Books is an imprint of Survival Books, which was established in 1987 and by the mid-1990s was the leading publisher of books for expats and migrants planning to live, work, buy property and retire abroad. In 2000, we published the first of our London books, *Living and Working in London*, and since then have added over 20 more London titles, including our new series of walks' books. We now specialise in alternative London guidebooks for both residents and visitors. See our websites for our latest titles.

## Readers' Guide

- ◆ **Contact details:** These include the address, telephone number and website. You can enter the postcode to display a map of the location on Google and other map sites or, if you're driving, enter the postcode into your satnav.
- ◆ **Opening hours:** These can change at short notice, therefore you should confirm by telephone or check the website before travelling, particularly over Christmas/New Year and on bank holidays, when many places are closed. Many venues open daily, while some open only on weekdays. Note that some establishments – such as libraries – require visitors to register or to be a member (which may be free).
- ◆ **Transport:** The nearest tube or railway station is listed, although in some cases it may involve a lengthy walk. You can also travel to most venues by bus and to some by river ferry. Venues outside central London are usually best reached by car, although parking can be difficult or impossible in some areas. Most venues don't provide parking, particularly in central London, and even parking nearby can be a problem (and very expensive). If you need to travel by car, check the local parking facilities beforehand (or take a taxi).
- ◆ **Prices:** Prices are liable to change and are intended only as a guide. Many venues – such as museums, galleries, parks, gardens and places of worship – usually offer free entry. Where applicable, a price guide is shown as follows: £ = (relatively) inexpensive, ££ = moderate, £££ = expensive.

### Disabled Access

Many historic public and private buildings don't provide wheelchair access or provide wheelchair access to the ground floor only. Wheelchairs are provided at some venues, although users may need assistance. Most museums, galleries and public buildings have a WC, although it may not be wheelchair accessible. Contact venues directly if you have specific requirements. The Disabled Go website ([disabledgo.com](http://disabledgo.com)) provides more in-depth access information for some destinations.

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Kyoto Garden, Holland Park

## Introduction

London is one of the world's most exciting cities, but it's also one of the noisiest; a bustling, chaotic, frenetic, over-crowded, manic metropolis of over 8 million people, where it can be difficult to find somewhere to grab a little peace and quiet. Nevertheless, if you know where to look London has a wealth of peaceful places – places to relax, chill out, contemplate, meditate, sit, reflect, browse, read, chat, nap, walk, think, study or even work (if you must) – where the city's volume is muted or even switched off completely.

*Peaceful London* contains over 250 of the author's and his friends', colleagues' and acquaintances' favourite locations throughout the city, from restful gardens and serene churches to silent libraries and inspiring galleries; intimate hotels to blissful spas and cosy cafés; interesting shops and atmospheric markets to appealing restaurants and charming tea rooms; quiet museums and lovely parks to relaxing neighbourhoods and friendly pubs – and much more. Moreover, these places haven't just been selected for their quietude but also for their excellence: every entry has something special to offer, be it a warm welcome, excellent food/drink, fascinating history, attractive ambience, glorious scenery or tempting wares on offer.

Peace is a relative term, however, and not all places are whisper-quiet all the time; even churches have bell-ringing and organ practice, and many parks host noisy school parties and sports events. You can, of course, expect bookshops, libraries, galleries, museums and spas (and churches and gardens!) to be peaceful most of the time, but even cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars can be surprisingly quiet – although you may need to time your visit a little more carefully. With regard to the latter, we have chosen venues with gardens, terraces, panoramic views and cosy corners – places where you can find a bit of personal space and grab some 'me' time along with your refreshments.

So, whether you're seeking a place to recharge your batteries, rest your head, revive your spirits, restock your larder or refuel your body; somewhere to inspire, soothe or uplift your mood; or just wish to discover a part of London that's a few steps further off the beaten track, *Peaceful London* will steer you in the right direction.

**Silence is Golden!**

*David Hampshire*  
January 2019



# 1. Afternoon Tea



**T**here are few experiences more relaxing than the typically English ode to self-indulgence: afternoon tea. From the clink of silver on china to the soft sighs as you succumb to yet another tasty morsel, it's a supremely soothing way to while away a few hours. This chapter also offers some suggestions that take the experience well beyond just a few scones and cucumber sandwiches. See page 4 for a price guide.

## Baskervilles Tea Shop



A lovely, old-fashioned teashop overlooking Broomfield Park in Palmers Green (north London), Baskervilles is passionate about the quality of its teas and the deliciousness of its scones and cakes. There's a wide range of teas, each blended to the shop's specification, including black, green and white teas to suit every mood and occasion.

Afternoon tea – which, weather permitting, can be enjoyed in the beautiful tranquil garden – features perennial favourites such as Victoria sponge, scones with clotted cream, cupcakes, lemon drizzle and chocolate brownies, plus a selection of dairy-, gluten- and wheat-free cakes. You can also buy teas to brew at home.

**Baskervilles Tea Shop, 66 Alderman's Hill, N13 4PP (020-8351 1673; [baskervillesteashop.co.uk](http://baskervillesteashop.co.uk); Palmers Green rail; Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 10am-5pm; £).**

## Brigit's Bakery

Situated in the heart of Covent Garden, Brigit's Bakery (or B Bakery for short) is the brainchild of French couple Philippe and Brigitte Bloch, who opened their authentic boutique bakery and patisserie (check out the fabulous cake counter) and *salon de thé* in 2012.

The scrumptious afternoon tea – a combination of English tradition with a delicate French twist – is served in their delightful pastel-painted tearoom. It includes a selection of sandwiches and cakes – macaroons, meringues, petits choux, mini cupcakes, blinis and quiches – and a huge choice of loose-leaf teas from French tea specialists Betjeman & Barton. There's the option to add Prosecco, Champagne or cocktails, and they even offer afternoon tea tours aboard a 1960 Routemaster bus!

**Brigit's Bakery, 6-7 Chandos Place, WC2N 4HU (020-3026 1188; [london.b-bakery.com/afternoon-tea-london](http://london.b-bakery.com/afternoon-tea-london); Leicester Square tube; Mon-Fri, Sun 10am-7pm, Sat 9am-8pm; ££).**



## Brown's Hotel



One of London's most elegant hotels, historic Brown's is where Queen Victoria used to take tea. The English Tea Room remains one of London's most fashionable venues, combining period features – wood panelling, open fires and intricate Jacobean ceilings – with comfortable sofas and armchairs, against a background of soft piano music.

The traditional afternoon tea (with optional Champagne) is superb and for the health-conscious there's a 'tea-tox' healthy option that's a lighter take on this timeless treat, with fewer carbs, less fat and dairy/gluten-free choices. It's somewhere to celebrate a special occasion with a special person.

**Brown's Hotel, Albemarle Street, W1S 4BP (020-7518 4155; [roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/browns-hotel/restaurants-and-bars/english-tea-room](http://roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/browns-hotel/restaurants-and-bars/english-tea-room); Green Park tube; daily noon-6.30pm; £££).**

## Dominique Ansel Bakery

Enjoy an extra special tea, on a beautiful covered garden terrace, created by the best pastry chef on the planet. This accolade was awarded to Dominique Ansel by The World's 50 Best Restaurants ([theworlds50best.com](http://theworlds50best.com)), and his tea menu lives up to his reputation. It traces the path of a flower from seed to full bloom, featuring savoury and sweet bites, warm scones with homemade berry jam, clotted cream and more.

Choose from a trio of different menu options, from Signature afternoon tea to Sparkling tea with a glass of wine or bubbly, or Dominique's pièce de résistance, Splendid Tea, with special additions such as butter-poached Canadian lobster rolls and Sevruga caviar with buckwheat blinis and crème fraîche. Magnifique!

**Dominique Ansel Bakery London, 17-21 Elizabeth Street, SW1W 9RP (020-7324 7705; [dominiqueansellondon.com](http://dominiqueansellondon.com); Victoria tube/rail; Thu-Sun noon-4pm; £££).**



## Fortnum & Mason

A world-famous food emporium in Piccadilly, Fortnum & Mason (est. 1707) is a combination of delicatessen, department store, restaurant and living museum. Tea is served in the elegant green and blue Diamond Jubilee Tea Salon (opened by HM The Queen in 2012), where a pianist plays soothing tunes.

Fortnum's takes its tea *very* seriously – they offer some 80 varieties – and have expert 'tearistas' (a tea barista) on hand to advise and offer a complimentary tea-tasting session before you order. The beautiful table settings, with silver tea strainers and trademark duck-egg blue porcelain, are more than matched by the delectable food, which includes finger sandwiches, cakes (the chocolate and cherry is heavenly), pastries and scones. A national treasure and an unforgettable tea.

**Fortnum & Mason, 181 Piccadilly, W1A 1ER (020-7734 8040; [fortnumandmason.com/restaurants/afternoon-tea](http://fortnumandmason.com/restaurants/afternoon-tea); Green Park/Piccadilly tube; Mon-Sat 11.30am-7/7.30pm, Sun 11.30am-5.45pm; £££).**



## The Langham



Claimed to be the birthplace of afternoon tea, the glorious Palm Court at the Langham has been serving tea to the cream of London society for over 150 years. The beautiful Palm Court evokes all the elegance and gentility (with obligatory tinkling piano) that you'd expect from the five-star Langham hotel.

Created by Cherish Finden – multi award-winning executive pastry chef – the Wedgwood Afternoon Tea is a bespoke version of the traditional tea, inspired by Wedgwood porcelain and served in tailor-made 'Langham Rose' Wedgwood teaware. It includes a selection of some 40 tea blends, beautiful cakes and pastries, scrumptious scones and delicate finger sandwiches. Plus Champagne if you wish!

**The Langham, 1C Portland Place, Regent Street, W1B 1JA (020-7636 1000; [langhamhotels.com/en/the-langham/london/dining/palm-court](http://langhamhotels.com/en/the-langham/london/dining/palm-court); Oxford Circus tube; daily noon-5.30pm; £££).**

## Mo Café

**M**o Café is a division of the acclaimed Momo restaurant, a modern Moroccan souk-like restaurant offering superb North African cooking and one of London's most exotic interiors. The café specialises in Moroccan afternoon tea, served on the lovely terrace or in the chic café next to the main restaurant.



Tea consists of a substantial selection of savoury delights, such as Moroccan chicken wrap filled with a classic Moroccan chermoula (garlic and herb paste), cheese briouats (deep-fried puff pastries), and zaalouk and mechouia (smoked aubergine and roast peppers) served on toast. Mouth-watering sweets include *Maghrebi pastries* filled with dates, almonds and sesame, and scones with fig jam and clotted cream. Accompanied by a tempting selection of spicy Moroccan mint teas.

**Mo Café, 25 Heddon Street, W1B 4BH (020-7434 4040; momoresto.com; Oxford/Piccadilly Circus tube; daily noon-4.30pm; £-££).**

## Newens The Original Maids of Honour

**A** stone's throw from the gates of Kew Gardens, Newens (est. 1850) is a charming traditional tea room and bakery steeped in history. Quintessentially English, it's named after a melt-in-the-mouth cake that allegedly took Henry VIII's fancy when he found Anne Boleyn and the other Maids of Honour scoffing them at Richmond Palace. The recipe is a well-kept secret to this day, but they appear to have a puff pastry base, a layer of curd and a topping of (cheddar?) cheese – delicious and very moreish.

The tea room offers a variety of set teas ranging from a simple cream tea through a range of afternoon teas (with a choice of cake) and high tea (with sandwiches and savoury options as well). The pièce de résistance is, of course, Champagne high tea.



**Newens The Original Maids of Honour, 288 Kew Road, TW9 3DU (020-8940 2752; theoriginalmaidsofhonour.co.uk; Kew Gardens tube; daily 8.30am-5.30pm; £-££).**

## Orange Pekoe

**A**ward-winning Orange Pekoe (est. 2006) is a temple to tea, offering loose leaf teas in their purest form – indeed owners Marianna and Achilleas travel far and wide to find the finest handpicked tea leaves in the world. The tearoom is named after a tea grading term that refers to a range of high grade black teas of differing qualities and sizes, grown in India, Nepal and especially Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

Afternoon tea at OP is an informal affair and features the classic all-day cream tea of scones served with Cornish clotted cream and strawberry preserve, or traditional afternoon tea with sandwiches and cake. But it's the tea that takes centre stage and all 60 or so loose leaf or flower teas can be purchased in beautiful tea caddies or refill pouches.

**Orange Pekoe, 3 White Hart Lane, SW13 0PX (020-8876 6070; [orangepekoeteas.com](http://orangepekoeteas.com); Barnes Bridge rail; daily 2-5pm; £-££).**



## The OXO Tower Brasserie

**T**he OXO Tower is a landmark building in Southwark on the south bank of the Thames, acquired by the manufacturers of OXO beef stock cubes and largely rebuilt to an Art Deco design in the 1920s. It was refurbished in the '90s, with the OXO Tower restaurant, bar and brasserie on the rooftop.



The Brasserie is operated by Harvey Nichols and offers afternoon

tea with a difference – the difference being that 'tea' consists of four dessert tasting plates on a theme, e.g. Autumn or Foraging, teamed with a matching bespoke cocktail or Champagne. A little confusingly it's called 'Not Afternoon Tea'. A range of other equally original 'tea experiences' is available, too. An adventure for the tastebuds to rival Willy Wonka's creations – with views to die for!

**The OXO Tower Brasserie, OXO Tower Wharf, Barge House Street, SE1 9PH (020-7803 3888; [harveynichols.com/restaurants/oxo-tower-london](http://harveynichols.com/restaurants/oxo-tower-london); Waterloo rail/tube; Sun-Fri 3-5pm, Sat 2-4.30pm; ££-£££).**

## The Ritz



Served since 1906, afternoon tea at The Ritz is regarded by many as the quintessential English tea ‘ceremony’. It’s impeccably served in the spectacular Palm Court – originally called the Winter Garden – a dramatic, elegant salon of fanciful design, flanked by walls of mirrors, a ceiling of intricate gilded trellis design, marble pillars, birdcage chandeliers with ornate metal flowers, a striking stone fountain with gilded statues, fronded palms and a stunning central floral display.

Tea at The Ritz is formal and theatrical, as you take your place on the Palm Court’s ‘stage’, populated by elegantly-dress guests and immaculate waiters flitting among the tables set with delicate fine bone china and gleaming silver tea services, against a backdrop of soothing music from the resident pianist or string quartet.

The menu follows the classic theme: a selection of around 18 loose-leaf teas; delicate finger sandwiches with traditional fillings such as smoked salmon, cucumber, egg, roast ham and cheese; a daily selection of scrumptious tea cakes and pastries; and freshly-baked raisin and apple scones with strawberry preserve and Cornish clotted cream. For a special occasion you can order the celebration tea, which includes a celebratory cake. One for the bucket list but remember to book well in advance.

**The Ritz, 150 Piccadilly, W1J 9BR (020-7300 2345; [theritzlondon.com/palm-court](http://theritzlondon.com/palm-court); Green Park tube; daily 11.30am-9pm; £££).**



## The Shard



**A**fternoon tea at the Shard – the tallest building in Europe – gives a whole new meaning to the term ‘high tea’. Three Shard restaurants offer a tea service, all offering breath-taking views of the city’s skyline.

**Aqua Shard** (020-3011 1256, daily 1-5pm, £££) offers a contemporary English afternoon tea with a modern twist, served in the restaurant’s atrium located on the

31st floor. Tea includes delicious finger sandwiches such as Earl Grey tea-smoked Loch Duart salmon with caviar and dill-scented cream, while sweet delights include lemon meringue tart and cassis and yoghurt panna cotta.

One floor up, London Afternoon Tea at **Oblix West** (020-7268 6700, daily 2.45-4.30pm, £££) presents the very best produce from the capital, be it chai spices from Brick Lane or honeycomb from Harrow. The menu includes delicious sandwiches such as duck egg and truffle mayonnaise, scrumptious scones (cranberry, fresh honeycomb) and decadent pastries (yuzu and grapefruit,

pistachio and cherry). The choice of teas includes white peony, Cornish manuka and hibiscus flowers.

Higher still, the contemporary, Chinese-style **Ting Lounge at Shangri-La** (020-7234 8108, Mon-Sat noon-4pm, Sun noon-6pm, £££) on the 35th floor offers Traditional Afternoon Tea with a fine selection of sandwiches and desserts (such as cherry blossom roulade and lemon lavender tart), plus a choice of over 30 teas and optional Champagne.

Tea at the Shard isn’t cheap, but is well worth it for the amazing panoramic views – and it saves you paying a hefty fee (over £30 for an adult) simply to visit the viewing platform!



**The Shard, 32 London Bridge Street, SE1 9SG (the-shard.com/restaurants; London Bridge tube/rail; £££).**

## Sketch

If you want afternoon tea with a wow factor, Michelin-starred Sketch is hard to beat. A fashionable venue for food, art and music, it has a traditional but innovative afternoon tea menu created by chef Pierre Gagnaire. Tea is served in two very different rooms: the Glade, a fairy-tale dining room featuring ethereal woodland murals and wicker furnishings, and the Gallery, a breathtaking boudoir in stunning pink velvet designed by India Mahdavi, with provocative art by David Shrigley.

The tea itself – with optional (and irresistible) Champagne – offers a choice of around 20 teas (by Jing) and a show-stopping assortment of sweet and savoury treats: raspberry meringues, bubble gum marshmallows, dainty macaroons decorated with rose petals, caviar and quail's egg sandwiches, to mention just a few. Don't forget to visit the stunning egg-pod loos!

**Sketch, 9 Conduit Street, W1S 2XG (020-7659 4500; sketch.london; Oxford Circus tube; daily 11.30-4pm; £££).**



## Teanamu Chaya Teahouse

Teanamu Chaya Teahouse offers a unique afternoon tea with an Asian twist in a serene and calm hideaway off bustling Portobello Road. Entering tea master Pei Wang's quaint teahouse is to be instantly soothed, where 'taking tea' is an intimate and ceremonial experience – and a much healthier one than the sugar-laden traditional English treat.



Savour elegant open sandwiches, delicate, handmade patisserie and Chinese dim sum, such as kumquat ginger preserve and mature cheddar on wakame seaweed brown bread, vegetarian dumplings with chilli oil; mango seed cake and peanut sesame cookies; and olive oil lemon cake with mango curd. All accompanied by a choice of elegant, handmade Chinese and Japanese teas.

**Teanamu Chaya Teahouse, 4 Melina Road, W12 9HZ (teanamu.com/teahouse; Goldhawk Road tube; Sat-Sun noon-6pm; £-££).**

## The Wolseley



**T**he Wolseley is an elegant café-restaurant in the grand European tradition, occupying the former car showroom of Wolseley Motors designed in the '20s by William Curtis Green. The architect drew on Venetian and Florentine influences with exotic Eastern touches to create a majestic interior with marble floors, towering Corinthian pillars, grand arches and sweeping stairways – it's one of London's most beautiful and atmospheric spaces.

Afternoon tea is served in the cosy café, where there's a more casual atmosphere, although service is as polished as in the main dining room. It effortlessly blends English tradition with the quintessential European feel of the restaurant, and manages to offer a more modern (and less expensive) alternative to its chintzy neighbour, The Ritz.

Tea consists of lavish stacks of finger sandwiches, fruit scones and a selection of scrumptious cakes such as Battenberg or Sachertorte, accompanied by a pot of tea of your choice (although not as extensive as some other establishments) and optional Champagne. Nice touches are the hourglass timer (to time your tea), silver tea strainers and luxurious linen napkins. Those wanting a lighter option can choose the cream tea. Go for the ambience and the fascinating people-watching.

**The Wolseley, 160 Piccadilly, W1J 9EB (020-7499 6996; [thewolseley.com/afternoon-tea](http://thewolseley.com/afternoon-tea); Green Park tube; Mon-Fri 3-6.30pm, Sat-Sun 3.30-6.30pm; £-££).**



# 2.

## Bookshops



**B**ookshops are one of the few places where you can browse at length without attracting the attention of an over-enthusiastic salesperson – where, indeed, you’re positively encouraged to linger at your leisure. London has some of the best in the world, from general book stores to antiquarian, specialist to secondhand, offering seats and quiet corners, often with a cosy café for good measure.

## Daunt Books



**F**ounded in 1990 by James Daunt, the chain's flagship store on Marylebone High Street is housed in a beautiful Edwardian bookshop dating from 1912, believed to be the first custom-built bookshop in the world. The back room is particularly impressive, with its original oak mezzanine gallery, graceful skylights and stained-glass window. Entering the bookshop is like rewinding to a calmer, more graceful era, when people had time to browse and customer service wasn't just a cliché – staff are knowledgeable, while the books are beautifully displayed.

Although it isn't a travel bookshop, Daunt is seen first and foremost as a travel specialist thanks to its elegant three-level back room, home to row upon row of guide books, maps, language reference books, history, politics, travelogues and related

fiction. It's also good for literary fiction, biography, gardening and much more, and stages regular talks and events (see website for details).

Daunt Books has been trading for almost 30 years – a relatively short time in the book world – and now operates six shops (plus another three independent outlets) and has an enviable reputation as one of London's most popular independent booksellers. Daunt also branched out into publishing in 2010.

**Daunt Books, 83 Marylebone High Street, W1U 4QW (020-7224 2295; [dauntbooks.co.uk](http://dauntbooks.co.uk); Baker Street tube; Mon-Sat 9am-7.30pm, Sun 11am-6pm).**

