

Royal Attractions

Live like a king or queen on a royal day out in London. Read more about London's top royal attractions and learn about their fascinating history.

Morning: Buckingham Palace or Tower of London

Start your regal day out with a visit to the No 1 royal attraction in London: Buckingham Palace. The official London home of the Queen, Buckingham Palace is open to the public in August and September, when you can go on a tour of the State Rooms. Book tickets and you can also see the Royal Mews and The Queen's Gallery, which are open for a longer proportion of the year. For exact dates, visit The Royal Collection website. Time your visit well, and you could also see the Changing of the Guard, which takes place at 11.30am every day or every other day, depending on the time of year.

For a more bloodthirsty morning, visit the Tower of London. This imposing fortress hosted some of the most gruesome events in London's history, including torture, death and beheadings. Highlights include the Crown Jewels, the king's medieval bedchamber and the White Tower built by William the Conqueror.

If it's sunny, head to Hyde Park, one of London's eight Royal Parks. Near the Serpentine, you'll find the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. And if you continue into Kensington Gardens, you'll also see the impressive, gold-plated Albert Memorial, dedicated to Queen Victoria's husband, who died in 1861.

Lunch: Afternoon Tea in The Orangery

By now, you'll probably be feeling a bit hungry. Stop off for lunch at The Orangery in Kensington Palace. This stunning 18th-century building is the perfect setting for a royal lunch. In good weather, you can sit on the terrace for a view of the palace and gardens. The food on offer at The Orangery ranges from delicious homemade lunches to traditional afternoon tea, cakes and pastries. There's a special children's menu and older visitors can enjoy a good selection of teas, premium wines and champagne.

Afternoon: Kensington Palace

Next, it's time to visit Kensington Palace itself. Inside the palace, you can see Queen Victoria's bedroom, the long King's gallery and King George I's staircase, lined with magnificent paintings of the court. Outside, the sunken garden is a lovely spot for a quiet stroll.

Followers of fashion will enjoy the display of dresses once worn by Diana, Princess of Wales, and the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection. Until 2012, Kensington Palace is also hosting an exhibition of contemporary fashion, The Enchanted Palace, which includes work by Vivienne Westwood.