YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ROYAL LONDON
Introduction

From the team at serviced apartment specialists, Central London Apartments, comes a dedicated London-focused blog, London Unlocked, covering all aspects of London Travel. Central London Apartments have over 300 apartment buildings spanning across the city and boasting similar excellent locations as many famous London hotels.

A city rich with royal history...

London is steeped in history and as the UK is one of the few remaining countries with a Royal family, no trip to the capital is complete without soaking up some British regal tradition. So to help you get the full royal experience, we’ve put together what we think is the ultimate Royal London itinerary, ideal for enjoying some pomp and pageantry in the city.

Come, explore Royal London with us...
Perhaps the most exciting landmarks to witness in London are the royal palaces and esteemed regal houses. Some remain exclusive London homes to the British Royal family whilst others have been opened to the public to explore. Some open just for a short time every year – so always check with the attraction direct to avoid disappointment.
Buckingham Palace

One of the most famous homes in the world and one of the few remaining Royal Palaces, Buckingham Palace has been home to the British Monarchy since 1837 and is the main residence of Her Majesty the Queen. This regal and impressive building sits at the end of The Mall and is surrounded by St James’ Park and Green Park. See the guards in the palace grounds and the famous balcony which has witnessed many significant Royal appearances. In the summer months you can even venture inside the Palace with pre booked tickets.

ATTRACTION DETAILS

London SW1A 1AA

NEARBY TUBE STOPS

Hyde Park Corner
Green Park
Victoria
St James’ Park

Don’t miss - the Garden Shop, full of beautiful London memorabilia
The home of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince George and the new royal baby, Kensington Palace has been a royal residence since the 17th Century, and was once home to King George I and II, Queen Victoria and more recently the late Diana Princess of Wales.

Built in 1605 this beautiful palace is surrounded by Kensington Gardens. Several parts of the palace are open to the public including the Grand King’s State apartments, the regal red saloon room once used by Queen Victoria, the picturesque gardens and the fashion rules exhibition featuring garments worn by the Queen, Princess Margaret and Diana Princess of Wales.
Clarence House

Close to Buckingham Palace, just off the Mall, Clarence House has a long history as a royal residence. It was the London home to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth from 1947 when she married the Duke of Edinburgh, and home to the Queen Mother from 1953 – 2002. When the house opens to the public in the summer months, many items from the Queen Mother’s Royal Collection can be viewed.

Today it is the official London home of Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall, Camilla, but the Prince of Wales also spent his early years here between the ages of one and three. Clarence House, until recently, was also the official residence of Prince William and Kate, and Prince Harry.

Before you visit: Check for annual summer opening dates

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Hampton Court Palace

Hampton Court Palace is famously known as the favourite royal residence of Henry VIII, where he lived with a number of his wives and where his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, was famously put under house arrest following accusations of adultery. Her ghost has been said to have appeared in the Palace’s Haunted Gallery.

Hampton Court Palace is located on the edge of Bushy Park in Greater London, just 35 minutes by train from London Waterloo. The Palace is open year round offering guided tours, beautiful 60 acre gardens and a varied calendar of family events including their famous outdoor ice rink in the winter months. Hampton Court Palace is also home to perhaps the world’s most famous hedge maze.

Tip: Check out the extensive events calendar for family fun.

ATTRACTION DETAILS

East Molesey
Surrey KT8 9AU

NEARBY TRAIN STATION

Hampton Court
(35 mins from London Waterloo)

BOOK TICKETS

www.hrp.org.uk
Apsley House

Once home to the Duke of Wellington, the famous general who defeated Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo 1815, Apsley House is located on the South East Corner of Hyde Park. A stunning example of Georgian grandeur, visitors to Apsley House can enjoy the glittering interiors, elegant artworks and fine pieces on display.
Kew Palace

A beautiful building, located in the equally stunning Royal Botanical Kew Gardens on the banks of the River Thames, Kew Palace was restored and reopened to the public in 2006. The palace was once home to King George III, grandfather to Queen Victoria. In 1899, Victoria opened the palace to the public.

In recent years it has undergone vast restoration and played host to the Queen’s 80th birthday celebrations in 2006.

Royal Botanical Gardens
Kew, Richmond
Surrey TW9 3AB

ATTRACTION DETAILS
www.hrp.org.uk

NEARBY TRAIN STATION
Kew Gardens
(5 min walk from the station)
Kew Bridge Station
(10 min walk from station)

Don’t Miss – the Madam Tussauds’ Bust of King George III
Spencer House

Adjacent to St James’ Park, near to Buckingham Palace and Clarence House, is Spencer House, an aristocratic 18th Century town house. Eight stunningly restored state rooms are open to the public most Sundays throughout the year. The house is a breath taking example of regal architecture, completed in 1766 for ancestor of the late Princess Diana, the first Earl Spencer.
There are eight beautiful royal parks in London, all originally the property of the British monarchy. Today they are open to the public, offering peaceful retreats from the bustle of the city, each with their own unique characteristics. From immaculate gardens to al fresco dining, woodland walks to sporting activities, London’s royal parks have something for everyone visiting the city.
Hyde Park

Once the private hunting ground of Henry VIII, acquired in 1536, Hyde Park today boasts 350 acres of stunning greenery in the heart of the City. It is home to the beautiful Serpentine Lake, which spans across the park and into adjacent Kensington Gardens; the famous Speakers Corner where political, ethical, moral and local views are open discussed; and the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain.

© The Royal Parks

Visiting in winter? Don’t miss Hyde Park’s magical Winter Wonderland
St James’s Park

Running alongside the stretch of The Mall, St James’ Park is at the heart of London’s royal ceremonies and national celebrations, and is home to the Horse Guards Parade. It is the oldest of the royal parks, which was once a water meadow and later acquired by Henry VIII. Elizabeth I notably used the park for regular pomp and pageantry.
Richmond Park

Spanning a huge 2,500 acres, Richmond Park, is the largest of London’s Royal Parks. The park is home to 650 red and fallow deer as well as a wealth of other interesting wildlife. The park’s royal roots can be dated back as far as the late 13th Century, when it was known as the Manor of Sheen. Henry VII renamed the area Richmond during his reign.

© The Royal Parks

Can you spot one of the park’s 650 resident deer?
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Bushy Park

Located near to Hampton Court Palace, Bushy Park is filled with woodland, grassland, gardens and pretty ponds. Like Richmond Park it is home to red and fallow deer. The park’s main attractions include Chestnut Avenue, the formal Chestnut Tree lined approach to Hampton Court Palace, and the Diana Fountain, which honours the Roman Goddess Diana.
Regent’s Park

Measuring 395 acres The Regent’s Park is known for its beautiful Queen Mary Gardens, Open Air Theatre, London Zoo and Primrose Hill. Another of Henry VIII’s hunting grounds, today the park is still used for sporting pursuits, with activities including netball, tennis and running.

**Tip - take a walk up adjacent Primrose Hill for panoramic views of the city**
Kensington Gardens

Separated from Hyde Park by the Serpentine Bridge, Kensington Gardens are the stunning setting for Kensington Palace, the famous former home of Queen Victoria. It was Queen Victoria who commissioned the beautiful Italian Gardens, and her dedicated memorial to her husband Prince Albert is located here.

ATTRACTION DETAILS
Close to Hyde Park, Kensington, Bayswater and Notting Hill

NEARBY TUBE STOPS
Queensway
Notting Hill Gate
High Street Kensington
Lancaster Gate

Tip – tie in a visit with a trip to Kensington Palace

FIND OUT MORE
www.royalparks.org.uk
Green Park

A simple green space close to Buckingham Palace, Green Park is popular with picnickers and those looking for a quick rest in the city. Formerly a famous duelling site up until the mid-1600s, today Green Park enjoys a much more peaceful ambience with mature trees and grassland.

Must do: take a break with a book or a picnic in these peaceful surroundings.
Greenwich Park

Home to the Royal Observatory and the world famous meridian line, Greenwich Park is thought to date back to Roman times. Its hilltop location provides a beautiful vantage point from which to take in the city. It was another of Henry VIII’s deer grounds.

Greywolf © The Royal Parks

Must do: take a moment to appreciate the wonderful city views
Centuries of royal possessions can be viewed in some of London’s royal museums. Visitors to the capital can enjoy a glimpse into the city’s royal past. But don’t forget, many of the royal residences that are open to the public also house a range of unique royal collections to explore.
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Household Cavalry Museum

Find out all there is to know about the most senior regiment of the British Army at the Household Cavalry Museum. With traditions dating back to 1660, the Household Cavalry guard and protect Buckingham Palace and the British monarchy. Located at Horse Guards – the official entrance to the Royal residence - you can discover all the pomp and pageantry involved with hands on displays, exhibitions and even a chance to see troopers in stables preparing their horses.

© The Household Cavalry Museum

Don’t miss – a glimpse at the real working stables
Queen’s Gallery

Located in Buckingham Palace the Queen’s Gallery is open year round and is a dedicated space for changing exhibitions from the Royal Collection.

ATTRACTION DETAILS
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA

NEARBY TUBE STOPS
Hyde Park Corner
Green Park
Victoria
St James’ Park

BOOK TICKETS
www.royalcollection.org.uk

Visiting with kids? Enjoy the Millar Learning Room, a fun interactive space.

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National Portrait Gallery

Located in London’s West End area, the National Portrait Gallery houses numerous collections of famous monarchs throughout history, including a portrait set of early English Kings and Queens, as well as official portraits documenting the lives of modern day royals like Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

ATTRACTION DETAILS
St Martin’s Place
London WC2H 0HE

NEARBY TUBE STOPS
Leicester Square
Piccadilly Circus
Charing Cross
Embankment

BOOK TICKETS
www.npg.org.uk

National Portrait Gallery
© Wellington Collection, Apsley House (English Heritage)

Must see - the collection of portraits documenting the life of the Queen
London is well known for its love of pomp and ceremony, and visitors to London love nothing more than experiencing a royal ceremony or celebration for themselves.
Changing of the Guard

If you want to see London’s royal traditions at their best then head over to Buckingham Palace to watch the Changing of the Guard. This historic tradition has taken place since 1660 and sees the Queen’s Royal Guards change shift. The soldiers march down The Mall to Buckingham Palace accompanied with the band. It is quite a sight and takes place every day in the summer and every other day during the winter months.

ATTRACTION DETAILS
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA

FIND OUT MORE
www.royalcollection.org.uk

NEARBY TUBE STOPS
Hyde Park Corner
Green Park
Victoria
St James’ Park

A daily event April – July, alternate days thereafter.
Changing of the Queen’s Lifeguard

A lesser known ceremony, the Changing of the Queen’s Lifeguard takes place daily on Horse Guard Parade St James’ Park. Since this ceremony is not as widely known about, you can often find smaller crowds than with the Changing of the Guards (foot guards.) Also, there are no railings or barriers separating onlookers, so this can be a good choice for those visiting London with children who want to experience the pomp and ceremony of this tradition.
The city is full of sights that have connections to royalty, above and beyond their royal residences, parks, collections and ceremonies. Don’t leave London before checking out some of these world famous attractions.
Westminster Abbey

This historic abbey was founded in 960 and has always been a significant place for the Royal family. A short walk away from Buckingham Palace this place of worship has seen several royal events including the Queen’s Coronation in 1953, the tragic funeral of Princess Diana, and the more recent celebration of the royal wedding between HRH Prince William and Catherine Middleton.

Tip – book on a verger guided tour to learn more about the Abbey
Dating back to the Norman Conquest, the Tower of London is one of the city’s oldest buildings. Rich in history and full of tales of days gone by it is now one of the most visited attractions in the UK. The Tower is packed with things to see and do for people of all ages.

See the iconic beefeaters who guard the Tower with their loyal ravens, the royal armouries, the famous Royal crown jewels and discover all the gruesome tales the tower has witnessed.

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Tower of London

Don’t miss – the spectacular display of
The Crown Jewels
The Royal Mews is one of the finest working stables in the world and home to all the Royal state vehicles. Located at Buckingham Palace visitors can experience the work of the Royal Household department and view all the Royal transport from the horses and carriages to impressive motor vehicles. A particular highlight is the golden carriage last used for the celebrations of the Queen’s Jubilee.
If you can’t get to one of the Royal sights then why not try some goods fit for the Queen instead! There are several companies in London that produce goods or services to the Royal family which gives them a Royal warrant. To achieve a Royal warrant a company must have supplied goods or services to the Royal family for over 5 years. The Royal warrant is a sign of service, quality, and excellence.

In London some of the Queen’s favourites include Fortnum and Mason, House of Fraser, John Lewis, Austin Reed, Garrad Jewellers, Partridges of Sloane Square, and chocolates from Prestat.
GET THE ROYAL TREATMENT

We might not be able to offer you your own quarters in Buckingham Palace, but we can bring you a luxury serviced apartment with an enviable central London location. Serviced Apartments give you more space, freedom and flexibility than many London hotels so why not treat yourself, family and friends to an alternative London break.

Browse and book our apartments online:
www.central-london-apartments.com