



The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide Afternoon Tea Experiences List Is Announced

February 15, 2023 ---- Washington DC ---- [Historic Hotels Worldwide®](#), a collection of more than 300 authentic historic hotels in over 46 countries, is pleased to announce The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide Afternoon Tea Experiences List. The hotels selected for recognition in this semi-annual list offer heritage travelers and cultural experience seekers a chance to immerse themselves in a tradition from Victorian Britain that is being preserved and revived around the world: afternoon tea. While the custom of tea ceremonies dates back millennia around the world, the tradition of afternoon tea—a light meal served mid-afternoon with tea or sparkling wine—is traced to the English aristocrat Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford and Queen Victoria’s Lady of the Bedchamber. Her household served dinner fashionably late, at or after 8 p.m., but the duchess did not want to wait so long between luncheon and supper. Being regularly hungry at 3 or 4 p.m., she instituted a new meal in the early 1840s. The influential Duchess of Bedford became a trendsetter when her “afternoon tea” became popular among women of means in the British hegemony during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, a time when social and cultural mores were rapidly changing for these women. The pursuit of activities away from one’s home became socially acceptable, even fashionable, and afternoon tea was a hit. Many of the historic hotels selected for the list are in the British Isles—the United Kingdom and Ireland—but other historic destinations with afternoon tea experiences can be discovered in China, Portugal, Singapore, Myanmar, and the Netherlands. These regions all played a vital role in the global history of tea, and many of the hotels selected make the history of tea and tea rituals part of the cultural experience they offer visitors. A perfect fit with hotels, the tradition of afternoon tea symbolizes hospitality, tradition, indulgence, sustenance, and friendship. Several of the afternoon teas selected for this list serve guests tea with a twist, offering literature, augmented reality, art, and dancing. The 25 hotels selected offer visitors opportunities to discover the history of tea, indulge in afternoon tea, and experience its romance within meticulously restored historic settings that include elegant castles, refined manor homes, and luxury hotels.

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[The K Club](#) (550 AD) Kildare, County Kildare, Ireland

On an estate dating to 550 with buildings that date to 1832, The K Club is a luxury Irish resort within the quaint county of Kildare and was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2014. The resort offers a wealth of dining outlets among its many on-site experiences, including

afternoon tea in the Drawing Room—one of the most refined and elegant dining spaces at The K Club. The Drawing Room boasts hand-painted wallpaper, picture windows, a magnificent fireplace, oversized antique vases and a gentle sense of genteel refinement. Both classic and festively themed afternoon teas are enjoyed here in this historic setting. The K Club invites visitors to experience this indulgent occasion, created for pure enjoyment. The Drawing Room serves a menu featuring an assortment of scones and Irish-themed sandwiches, including Quinlan’s Smoked Irish Salmon, mature cheddar and baked ham, and free-range eggs. Pastries and cakes served include chocolate, blueberry tart, carrot cake, and Battenberg Cake. Gluten free and vegan options are available, as is a dedicated children’s menu. Guests may add to their tea service wine, including sparkling wine. Afternoon tea is served daily from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Reservations are recommended.

Dromoland Castle Hotel (1014) Newmarket-on-Fergus, County Clare, Ireland

The enchanting Dromoland Castle Hotel has been welcoming guests since the 16th century. It is the ancestral home of the O’Briens of Dromoland, with a lineage that dates back over 1,000 years to one of the last High Kings of Ireland, Brian Boru. The castle was massively updated and renovated in the 1820s, with additions, carvings, and priceless art, and little has changed since then. A long-standing tradition at Dromoland Castle, the hotel aims to impress with this fun and indulgent ritual. Named for a long-standing member of the hotel’s staff, Mrs. White’s Afternoon Tea is a feast fit for royalty. Guests enjoy the prettiest selection of treats: scrumptious finger sandwiches, warm scones with clotted cream and homemade jams, delicate pastries, signature tea rack, and sweet confections. Loose-leaf teas from around the world are served in sparkling silver teapots, alongside beautiful fine china. Mrs. White’s Afternoon Tea is served from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Reservations are recommended. Dromoland Castle Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2011 and won the Historic Hotels Worldwide Awards of Excellence Historic Hotels Worldwide Sustainability Champion award in 2022 for its commitment to protecting the environment for future generations. It is a gateway to Ireland’s history and culture, close to the Aran Islands, Ennis, and the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark.

Castlemartyr Resort (1210) County Cork, Ireland

Once a sprawling medieval fortress and dating back to the Normans in the 13th century, Castlemartyr Resort operates today as a magnificent holiday retreat just outside the city of Cork, County Cork, Ireland. The resort debuted in 2008 following years of extensive renovation and was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2022. Among the many outstanding services included within the authentic destination, Castlemartyr Resort serves afternoon tea in the Knights Bar in the Manor House. Guests are invited to enjoy afternoon tea beneath the Lafranchini-designed Rococo ceiling, overlooking the formal gardens of Castlemartyr Resort, while indulging in vintage-style service. The Knights Bar is one of the Manor House’s architectural gems with its famous Rococo-style stucco ceiling, floor-to-ceiling sash windows, warming fireplace, and beautiful decoration. Castlemartyr Resort’s afternoon tea features a pot of tea or specialty coffee accompanied by dainty finger sandwiches, tea breads, pastries, and scones with clotted cream and preserves. Gluten-free, children’s tea, and sparkling wine options are available. Afternoon Tea is served Wednesday through Sunday, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam (1578) Amsterdam, Netherlands

When the Netherlands' Dutch East India Company brought the first recorded shipment of tea leaves to trade in Europe in 1610, the Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam—which had been established in 1578 originally to house a religious order—was serving as lodgings for royal and upper-class men of Amsterdam. Inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018, Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam today continues its centuries-long tradition of hospitality through its contemporary afternoon tea service. In 2023, the talented Pâtissiers from Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam created an exceptional and delightful afternoon tea, inspired by Lewis Carroll's novel, *Alice in Wonderland*. At the Alice in The Grand Wonderland Afternoon Tea, guests are invited to join Alice on her journey through Wonderland while enjoying delicious 'eat me' bites and 'drink me' teas selected by the hotel's tea sommelier, Cecilia Tjing. The tea is served on a black étagère, with white plates featuring beautiful golden leaves. The Alice in The Grand Wonderland Afternoon Tea is served, naturally, in the Library 'Or,' which has a rich collection of books about local culture, architecture and French "savoir-faire." The hotel's traditional afternoon tea is offered throughout the year and is also served in the Library 'Or.' In addition to the tea pairing, the hotel also offers the ultimate experience for the true whisky lover with a Glenfiddich Scotch & Sweets tea. When the weather is agreeable, afternoon tea can be enjoyed in The Garden Terrace The Garden Terrace can be found in the beautiful inner garden of The Grand. It is one of Amsterdam's best kept secrets; an oasis of peace and tranquility, situated in the heart of the city.

Sopwell House (1603) St. Albans, England, United Kingdom

Located in the peaceful countryside of Hertfordshire, England, Sopwell House is a historic, Georgian-style hotel that dates back over 300 years, as the earliest known record of the location is a deed from 1603. Just a 20-minute train ride from London, afternoon tea at Sopwell House is served in the hotel's refurbished restaurant, Omboo, and the experience is a treat not to be missed. Guests enjoy a beautiful, tiered stand complete with delicious seasonal delicacies and pastries, homemade scones with Devonshire clotted cream and strawberry preserves, and traditional finger sandwiches. There is an option to add a refreshing glass of Champagne along with the accompanying Newby loose-leaf tea or filtered coffee. Specialty and themed afternoon teas are also often available throughout the year including Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Christmas. Please note that during these periods only the Afternoon Tea offering for that occasion will be available. Vegan, Vegetarian, and allergen-free options available.

The Trafalgar St. James London, Curio Collection by Hilton (18th century) London, England, United Kingdom

The Rockwell restaurant and lounge at The Trafalgar St. James London, Curio Collection by Hilton, serves a spin on afternoon tea: the Tipple Tea. The Trafalgar St. James London, Curio Collection by Hilton, was once home to a shipping business called the Cunard Steamship Company during the 18th century and became a fine hotel in 2017 after an extensive restoration, then inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018. Today, the hotel's bar manager and his

team of mixologists designed a selection of cocktails and bites, taking inspiration from classic afternoon tea elements and adding unique twists. The cocktails are a celebration of local British culture. Concoctions like the Earl Grey-infused "Victoria" cocktail and the "Twelve Buckingham Street" cocktail, made with 70 percent cacao essence, are fresh takes on the classic cup of tea or chocolate. Non-alcoholic cocktails are also available, such as "The Bee Project" (Everleaf Forest, honey water, lemon juice, chamomile soda, honeycomb) and "Rosebay" (rosebud syrup, pink grapefruit shrub, alcohol-free sparkling wine, violet bitters). On the menu are savory and sweet creations: smokey chipotle pulled beef sliders, pickles and taleggio crab rolls, seaweed relish foie gras, toasted brioche, apple calvados jelly baked camembert, sourdough, smoked chili jelly, sweet mini choux buns, banana brûlée, butter shortbread, peach tartelette, chartreuse jelly, brandy crème beau rivage, and pistachio chantilly. Tipple Tea is served Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday through Sunday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Tivoli Palacio de Seteais (1787) Sintra, Portugal

More than a luxurious hotel, Tivoli Palácio de Seteais is a breathtaking 18th-century romantic retreat exuding and celebrating Portuguese history and heritage. One celebrated aspect of that history is the nation's role in the popularization of tea. The estate is located on the Sintra hillside, a UNESCO World Heritage site, with views of the Moorish castle and Pena Palace, and was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2016. Afternoon tea at Tivoli Palácio de Seteais Hotel was revived in 2021 with the arrival of the new pastry chef, Cíntia Koerper. Koerper designed The Queens' Tea menus, served daily at 5 p.m., to spotlight the Portuguese connection to this genteel tradition. The Queens' Tea is inspired by two Queens of Portuguese history: Carlota Joaquina and Catarina de Bragança. The first menu is inspired by Queen Carlota Joaquina of Bourbon. She visited Seteais Palace with her husband, King D. João VI (John VI), in 1802. The owner of the palace at the time built the monumental arch linking the two wings of the Palace to celebrate their visit. The second afternoon tea menu is an homage to Queen Catherine of Bragança, daughter of the King of Portugal, who very famously popularized tea in England after she married England's King Charles II in 1662. Portugal was engaged in a lucrative tea trade with China in the mid-1600s and Catherine brought loose leaf tea to England as part of her dowry. At the time, tea was used only medicinally in England, but the young queen made it popular as a social beverage by the end of the 17th century. Both menus are served in one of the magnificent ballrooms of the hotel, surrounded by tapestries and frescos, thousands of art pieces, and exclusive fine china from the recognized Portuguese brand Vista Alegre. The dinnerware of Tivoli Palácio de Seteais was design exclusively to the hotel by Vista Alegre, a very traditional Portuguese brand, creating beautiful fine china since 1824. Visitors can buy a selection of tea blends at the hotel and can take with them any leftovers of the tea service. Reservations are required for the Queen Carlota Joaquina menu. *[Featured Recipe: Tivoli Palacio de Seteais's Palace Scones By Pastry Chef Cintia Koerper.](#)*

Great Southern Killarney (1854) Killarney, County Kerry, Ireland

Afternoon tea has been served at Great Southern Killarney since it opened in County Kerry, Ireland in 1854. The Great Southern Killarney hotel first opened as The Railway Hotel in 1854

and was the first purpose-built railway hotel in Ireland. The train journey between Dublin and Killarney took over nine hours at this time, so the early morning train would arrive just in time for weary travelers to enjoy afternoon tea after checking in. Tea was originally served in one of the ladies' drawing rooms to the side of the Grand Foyer. In 1861, the town of Killarney hosted Queen Victoria and her entourage. While Queen Victoria did not stay at Great Southern Killarney, the hotel did host her entourage for the duration of their visit. While here, the queen's party enjoyed afternoon tea daily in the drawing rooms. Today, afternoon tea is served Wednesday through Sunday, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., beneath the gold gilded ceiling of The Garden Room restaurant. The Garden Room offers guests magnificent views of the hotels' surrounding six acres of gardens, previously featured in [The 2022 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide Most Magnificent Gardens List](#). The afternoon tea menu includes three tiers of sweets and savories, including Irish smoked salmon, egg, and watercress finger sandwiches, fruit and plain scones with jam and cream, and freshly baked cakes and other sweet treats. Guests can select from a variety of Ronnefeldt Tea options or coffee, served in fine china cups and saucers, and even opt to add a little sparkle to the afternoon tea experience with a glass of Prosecco.

[Featured Recipe: Great Southern Killarney's Scones](#)

[Oatlands Park Hotel](#) (1856) Weybridge, England, United Kingdom

Located within a Grade II-listed building developed in the late 18th century, Oatland Parks Hotel in Weybridge, England is a brilliant holiday destination with a heritage that harkens back to King Henry VIII and the greater Tudor dynasty. It originated in the 16th century, when the king gave the estate to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, to use at her leisure. The manor became a grand hotel in 1856. Today, not only can guests experience aristocratic heritage while staying at this spectacular historic hotel, but they can also enjoy an incredibly memorable vacation. A significant component to the hotel's contemporary identity is its culinary offerings, such as its fantastic afternoon tea sessions. Indulge in one of the most delicious British traditions with afternoon tea at Oatlands Park Hotel. Tea at Oatlands Park Hotel is set in the splendor of the Mulberry Restaurant with views across the Surrey countryside and gardens, for which the hotel was selected for [The 2022 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide Most Magnificent Gardens List](#). Guests enjoy sandwiches, warm scones, homemade cakes, and pastries, accompanied by a range of teas from T2. The hotel caterers can serve groups of up to 30 guests in the beautifully decorated Drawing Room. For smaller groups, there is private dining available in the Garden Room and Cromwell Suite. Afternoon tea is served Monday to Saturday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Reservations are recommended.

[Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin](#) (1885) Noordwijk aan Zee, Netherlands

Located along the North Sea coastline halfway between The Hague and Amsterdam, the Grand Hotel Huis Ter Duin offers afternoon tea in its stunning Brasserie La Terrasse restaurant. Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin first opened in 1885 and was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2011. With its long stretch of white sandy beach, the resort regularly welcomed the royal families of the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as throngs of international celebrities. Members

of the House of Orange and members of the Belgian Royal Family were regular guests, charmed by the intimate service and distinctive accommodations. The hotel's Victorian past, and the story of afternoon tea and Anna Russell, 7th Duchess of Bedford, inspired the Dutch hotel's Chef de Cuisine to compose a contemporary version of High Tea. In the warm, stylish atmosphere of Brasserie La Terrasse, guests and visitors enjoy fresh ingredients and an international selection of teas to give a relaxing afternoon a royal touch. While serving the tea, the restaurant host speaks to guests about the origin of the teas and its combinations with the food served. Afternoon tea is served daily between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Reservations are required at least 24 hours in advance.

Raffles Singapore (1887) Singapore

Inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018, Raffles Singapore rose from humble origins as a small seaside hotel that first debuted in the late 1800s. When the Sarkies hotelier family acquired the building for the development of a luxury hotel in Singapore, they named it "Raffles Hotel" in 1887 and the business became one of the most sought-after destinations in Southeast Asia. One of the new offerings of the hotel under the Sarkies' management was afternoon tea and it has been a mainstay ever since. Today, afternoon tea is served in the hotel's Grand Lobby. Along with the traditional and chic afternoon tea menu, special afternoon tea menus are offered throughout the year, such as menus for December festivals and Valentine's Day. During winter 2023, the hotel is spotlighting Korean cuisine in its special Seoul Afternoon Tea menu. Guests can delight in a Korean-inspired sweet and savory spread including beef bulgogi roll, and a delectable array of traditional Korean sweet delights curated by Executive Pastry Chef Tai Chien Lin. These sweet treats are inspired by comforting flavors and familiar ingredients well-loved by locals and visitors of Seoul. As with all its afternoon teas, the Seoul Afternoon Tea is presented beautifully on a three-tier silver stand and served alongside The Grand Lobby's signature home-made original and raisin scones, complemented with clotted cream and strawberry rose jam. Guests may choose to elevate the experience with a choice of "Mariage Frères" loose tea leaves or Raffles' custom blended coffee. Reservations are required.

The Savoy London (1889) London, England, United Kingdom

For over 130 years, The Savoy London has served an award-winning traditional afternoon tea, the quintessential afternoon tea that set the standards for the experience around the world. When it was established in 1889 in Victorian London, The Savoy was, for a time, the only public place where it was respectable for upper-class and aristocratic women to dine. Until then, these ladies were expected to dine in their own homes or at the homes of friends. Norms began to change when Lady de Grey, the wife of one of the Prince of Wales' racing friends, hosted a luncheon for a select number of her friends, and these aristocratic ladies dined, unchaperoned, in The Savoy's main restaurant. In 1895, Princess Alexandra attended a wedding breakfast at The Savoy without her husband and, if the future Queen could dine out at The Savoy without her husband in the same room, then any woman could. When other women saw that it was now acceptable for them to dine in public, they followed that lead. Ladies could now have afternoon tea out with their friends as they liked. In the evenings, they would still come to The Savoy with their husbands, for as the first famous General Manager of The Savoy, Cesar Ritz, said "Where the wives go,

their husbands will follow.” All hotel dining took place primarily in The Savoy Restaurant at the time (now the River Restaurant). Afternoon tea is still served in the same location today, on Monday and Tuesday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and on Wednesday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. While The Savoy’s afternoon tea has evolved over the years, the essential components remain the same: tea, sandwiches, and patisserie, complimented by creative freedom for pastry chefs. The traditional afternoon tea comes with savory and sweet delights, with tea and options for Champagne, English Sparkling Wine, sparkling tea, and non-alcoholic sparkling wine. The Savoy serves guests on fine china exclusively designed for the hotel. Special menus are available for special occasions, such as Valentine’s Day, Coronations, Christmas, and New Year’s. In the past, The Savoy hosted tango teas where a guest could enjoy the meal and dance the tango with a professional dancer. Live music remains part of the experience, though guests should bring their own preferred partner.

The Landmark London (1899) London, England, United Kingdom

The perfect balance of classic English elegance and contemporary luxury, The Landmark London is a perfect place to experience afternoon tea in London. Founded in 1899 as a railroad hotel along the Great Central Railway and inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2014, this historic landmark is close to the numerous attractions that have made London’s West End an international destination. The Landmark London has served—while perfecting and refining—the art of traditional afternoon tea for over a century. At The Landmark London, afternoon tea is experienced beneath the high palms of the hotel’s magnificent Victorian Winter Garden atrium. The setting is serene, and the atmosphere refined, with the soft sound of piano music. Guests indulge in an assortment of finger sandwiches including Lapsang Souchong smoked Scottish salmon with black truffle and chives, freshly baked scones served with rich Cornish clotted cream and preserves, along with a selection of crafted cakes and pastries. The tea selection is extensive: oolong, green, white, herbal, fruit, and black. The hotel even offers two house blends, Winter Garden Blend and The Landmark Blend.

The Strand Hotel (1901) Yangon, Myanmar

The Strand Hotel has stood as a cultural landmark in Yangon, Myanmar since the early 20th century, when Myanmar (Burma) was colonized by the British Empire. Originally a 12-room boarding house, the building was converted into a magnificent three-story hotel by the Sarkies hotelier family in 1901. It quickly became popular, especially among British expats who called the city home. In particular, the hotel’s bar, The Strand Sour, was popular for these residents to gather and reminisce. The hotel has since been a gathering place in the city for locals and international travelers alike, in part due to its fantastic culinary programs. Among its best offerings is its afternoon tea, which provides guests with a peaceful, elegant tea experience accompanied with a fine selection of pastries and savories. There are two menus to choose from, Classic High Tea and Myanmar High Tea. The latter menu comes with traditional Myanmar delicacies like rice dumplings, springs rolls, ginger salad, and pandan. Guests can even enjoy black Myanmar tea sourced from the country’s Shan region, along with more familiar staples like Early Grey, English Breakfast, and peppermint. Afternoon tea is served daily at The Strand

Hotel from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The hotel is close to cultural landmarks such as the Sule Pagoda, the Bogyoke Aung San Market, and the National Museum of Myanmar.

The Omni King Edward Hotel (1903) Toronto, Ontario, Canada

In the heart of Toronto's financial district lies the city's first luxury hotel, The Omni King Edward Hotel. The hotel, known as "The King Eddy," opened in 1903 and its afternoon tea service began soon after. The Omni King Edward Hotel captures the spirit of the city's old-world charm and vibrancy in a classic afternoon tea experience boasting a variety of delectable offerings. Afternoon tea was originally served on the second-floor rotunda, where guests could peer down into the hotel's lobby. It is now served in the Victoria Café on the main floor restaurant with windows looking into the lobby. The hotel's traditional British tea service was, and remains, popular with local and visiting elite. During the 1989 Queen's Plate horse race, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother was in attendance and fancied some tea with scones and shortbread. The Omni King Edward Hotel's executive chef at the time, John Higgins, had worked at Buckingham Palace and was summoned to prepare her scones and shortbread. To his surprise, the 'Queen Mum' popped into the kitchen and started chatting with him like old friends while he baked! Today, afternoon tea is served weekends only and more frequently during the festive season when the hotel offers a Nutcracker Afternoon Tea. Tea is served on classic Wedgwood fine bone china and comes with a menu of seasonal cakes, scones, and sandwiches, but there are also traditional favorites such as Battenberg Cake, Victoria Sponge, Coronation Chicken, and Beef Wellington. The hotel serves a vegetarian menu option, as well as a Jester's Tea for children 12 and under. The Omni King Edward was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2013 and won Best Historic Hotels Worldwide Hotel in the Americas in 2016.

Featured Recipe: The Omni King Edward Hotel's Baby Bump Madeleines

The Grand York (1906) York, England, United Kingdom

The Grand York was built in 1906 as a "Palace of Business" for the North Eastern Railway Company, which was one of the most powerful businesses in Great Britain at the time. This stunning space was renovated and restored to its original splendor in May of 2010, when it debuted as a luxurious hotel with fine restaurants and lounges. It was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018. Afternoon tea today is served at The Grand York's The Rise Restaurant, Terrace & Bar. From the high point of the hotel, afternoon tea can be enjoyed with views of the city's historic defensive walls with an open kitchen and floor-to-ceiling glass windows on one side. The hotel's Head Pastry Chef, Devin Jones, designs menus for afternoon tea that combine the history and character of the hotel's past with a modern twist. The restaurant pays homage to the building's former railway past with architectural quirks and color tones dating back to Edwardian England, but the marble laced throughout mixes tradition with modernity. The structured, gold-colored afternoon tea stand—as opposed to the classic design that is delicate and silver—is also an homage to the industrial heritage of the hotel. The hotel serves Newby Teas and offers upgrades for Prosecco, Champagne, and cocktails. Sausage rolls, a staple on the savory section of the menu, alongside sandwiches, are a nod to the region. The afternoon tea menu at The Grand changes seasonally. Special menus are available on occasions including Valentine's Day and the Christmas season, with optional mulled wine and Christmas

cocktail add-ons. Families with little ones are welcome year-round. Afternoon tea is offered daily from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. [*Featured Recipe: The Grand York's Honey Madeleines*](#)

Fairmont Empress (1908) Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

The Fairmont Empress hotel has hosted Victoria, British Columbia's grandest ritual of afternoon tea for over a century since it opened in 1908. The experience takes place in the re-imagined Lobby Lounge where guests sip tea surrounded by history, two fireplaces, and a view of Victoria's picturesque Inner Harbour. Inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018 and winner of the Historic Hotels Worldwide Awards of Excellence Best Historic Hotels Worldwide Hotel in the Americas in 2020, and designated as a National Historic Site of Canada, the Fairmont Empress has played host to several big names over the years, in politics, entertainment, and royalty. Prince Edward of Wales, his brother King George VI and his sister-in-law Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and HRH Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, all stayed at this luxury hotel. For its resplendent afternoon tea, the culinary team at Fairmont Empress creates decadent pastries and sandwiches that celebrate the history and character of the hotel, presented with a flourish on a tiered fine china tea service. The design of The Empress China was commissioned shortly after the hotel first opened in 1908. Afternoon tea had quickly become an extremely popular activity at Victoria's new tourist hotel, so it made sense to source a design as regal as the hotel in which it would be used. The crown in the design is believed to be symbolic of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, The Empress of India, and namesake of Fairmont Empress and Victoria, British Columbia. The Empress China continues to be used daily in the Lobby Lounge for Tea at the Empress. It is also available for purchase from the hotel's gift shop. Fairmont hotels serve LOT 25 teas, a collection of sustainably farmed and ethically sourced whole-leaf teas. Additionally, The Empress blend is a selection of seasonal, quality teas, created exclusively for Fairmont Empress by the Metropolitan Tea Company, containing components from Assam (thick, malty, and full-bodied), Kenya (floral-like with a golden coppery infusion), South India (superb, fruity, and sprightly), Ceylon (airy, almost piquant), and China (burgundy depth with light, oaky notes). Guests can upgrade their afternoon tea with a glass of Veuve Clicquot Champagne. The Fairmont Empress offers a festive afternoon tea during December and a Prince & Princess Tea throughout the year for children aged 5-12. [*Featured Recipe: Fairmont Empress' Signature Raisin Scones*](#)

The Waldorf Hilton, London (1908) London, England, United Kingdom

The Waldorf Hilton, London hotel opened with a glamorous Champagne reception in 1908 and, within just a few years, it was famous for its revelry. It began serving afternoon tea in 1913 as part of the hotel's famous Tango Tea, one of the exhilarating dance parties that happened regularly at the Waldorf Hotel's Palm Court ballroom. Soon, a young musician named Howard Godfrey began coordinating the festivities at the hotel with his famous orchestra, The Waldorfians. Together, Howard Godfrey and The Waldorfians helped transform the Waldorf Hotel into a premier entertainment establishment in London. The hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018 and today it serves a classic and a thematic afternoon tea in its Homage restaurant, with stunning Edwardian columns and sparkling chandeliers. In 2023, the

hotel is offering a “Be Our Guest” afternoon tea experience, which is inspired by Walt Disney's *Beauty & The Beast*. For the experience, tables are laid with white tablecloths, red napkins folded into roses, decorative rose lights, and dynamic fairy tale table entertainment. A live harpist plays songs from the film. For the hotel’s traditional afternoon tea, the settings are done with Waldorf branded fine china, but due to the theme, tea is currently served in Mrs. Potts and Chip porcelain teapots and cups. Guests can enjoy an array of open and finger sandwiches, such as pastrami, gherkin and horseradish cream on pumpernickel bread and smoked salmon, caviar, and pink grapefruit creme fraiche in Viennese bread. Classic scones are served with a selection of preserves and Devonshire clotted cream, and a selection of hand-made desserts are designed to share features of the characters from *Beauty & The Beast*. Afternoon tea is served Monday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa (1852) St Andrews, Scotland, United Kingdom

Afternoon tea at the Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa is the perfect gift for a special occasion for a golfer, or to be enjoyed “just because” in all its decadence. The resort hotel near St Andrews, Scotland, borders the renowned 17th Road Hole of the historic Old Course golf course, which is celebrated throughout the world for its contributions to the international history of golf. For centuries, people have traveled to this majestic destination to play on its prestigious fairways. The Old Course Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa overlooks the famous links course and is only a short stroll from the historic university town of St Andrews. The hotel dates to 1852 and it was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2017. Its refined afternoon tea is served either in the Conservatory or on the fourth floor of the hotel. Guests can take in the stunning views across the Old Course while they enjoy sandwiches, scones, cakes, pastries, and a wide selection of teas—or perhaps a glass or two of sparkling wine. Special themed afternoon teas throughout the year to mark events, such as Halloween and Christmas. The Valentine's Afternoon Tea spotlights an array of sweet treats, including strawberry and champagne macarons, teddy bear Bailey's cheesecakes, ruby chocolate and red velvet gateaux, and white chocolate and rose custard tarts.

Rosewood London (1914) London, England, United Kingdom

The Rosewood London’s award-winning contemporary and artistic afternoon tea is served in The Mirror Room of the 1914 Belle Epoque hotel, a tranquil setting for locals and international cultural travelers alike. Upon arrival, guests are greeted by an ornate archway leading to an enchanting Edwardian courtyard that embodies the opulence of this lavish hotel. The Rosewood London still possesses many of its original architectural features, such as the beautiful grand staircase and its breathtaking Cuban mahogany woodwork. The Mirror Room’s Chef Mark Perkins has incorporated his artistic talents into the tradition of afternoon tea and is constantly pushing creative boundaries, with unique art-inspired afternoon teas at Rosewood London. The latest Art Afternoon Tea experience is inspired by surrealist painter Salvador Dali’s famous works and designed with the *Surrealism Beyond Borders* exhibition at the Tate Modern in mind. Pushing boundaries for afternoon tea experiences, this contemporary afternoon tea explores virtual reality and NFT (non-fungible token; a digital object) experience. The Dali afternoon tea

is an immersive experience with augmented reality where guests can take a limited-edition digital token home with them in the form of art cakes.

The Fullerton Hotel Singapore (1924) Singapore

Established at a historic post office dating to 1924, The Fullerton Hotel Singapore has offered nothing but the best in contemporary comfort since it was converted into a hotel in the 1990s. It was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2011 and central to its appeal among cultural travelers today is its traditional afternoon tea. The meal is served in The Courtyard, the hotel's sunlit atrium lobby at the heart of the historic national monument. Afternoon tea is a lively affair and a timelessly elegant setting for leisure dining with delicious local and international specials and the traditional three-tier English afternoon tea. The afternoon tea experience stays true to the British ritual with a classic assortment of finely cut sandwiches and delicate pastries. On selected days, a harpist fills the high-ceiling atrium with melodious tunes. Enjoy a round of storied teatime staples, from the simple yet elegant cucumber sandwich, favored by aristocrats in the Victorian era, to the distinctive Battenberg Cake, a quintessentially British dessert created in 1884 as the royal wedding cake for Princess Victoria, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, and her husband Prince Louis of the Battenberg family. Meticulously curated and handcrafted daily by Executive Pastry Chef Siddharth Prabhu and his team, the assortment is presented on an elegant three-tiered tray alongside freshly baked scones with clotted cream and jam, paired with a selection of curated loose-leaf TWG teas and a variety of coffees from Bacha Coffee. This year's Valentine's Day special is an afternoon tea perfect for a cozy tête-à-tête. Presented in shades of eye-catching red and dreamy pink, the medley will entice with savory treats like Boston lobster with avocado and caviar, and duck rillettes with apple raisin compote. Like any love story, the romance continues with desserts both delicate and intense—from raspberry chiffon with lychee mousse and bandung rose gel, to a toasted macadamia tartlet with Araguani 72% dark chocolate mousse and hazelnut praline feuilletine.

Fairmont Peace Hotel (1929) Shanghai, China

A cherished local landmark on Shanghai, China's historic Bund for almost a century and inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2018, the Fairmont Peace Hotel is famed for its traditional high tea indulgence. Its Jasmine Lounge offers all sorts of delightful savories, freshly baked buttermilk scones with homemade fruit preserves and clotted cream, tea sandwiches and French pastries, presented on tiered silver tea stands. Afternoon tea is served daily from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. This historic hotel serves a celebrated afternoon tea with treats and drinks, but it is most famous for its Saturday Tea Dance. During tea dances, a live orchestra plays and professional dance instructors are present to provide guests with entertainment and able partners. The instructors offer informal ballroom dancing lessons, enabling everyone to participate in this elegant Saturday afternoon social gathering. The tea dance hails back to Shanghai's 1930s 'Golden Age' and is a revival of the tea dances hosted at the hotel in its early years. At a Saturday Tea Dance, guests can dip and sway, waltz, and foxtrot on the marble floors of the Jasmine Lounge, as music from an orchestra cascades from the balcony above. The hotel's Peace

Museum also offers a High Tea Tour with a guide visiting up to nine designated heritage sites and ending with tea in the Jasmine Lounge. Reservations recommended.

Sommerro (1931) Oslo, Norway

Once the headquarters for Oslo, Norway's preeminent utility company, Oslo Lysverker, the art deco building today is Sommerro, boutique hotel. The building dates to the early 1930s and was inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide in 2022. For travelers, part of the excitement of staying at Sommerro is experiencing culinary offerings, including afternoon tea. At To Søstre ("Two Sisters"), visitors and neighborhood locals enjoy one of the city's best afternoon tea settings in elegant surroundings. To Søstre's abundance of greenery and natural light sets the stage for a break from everyday life. The restaurant's textiles are inspired by *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, a Norwegian fairytale similar to the Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche and the French fairytale *La Belle et la Bête*. Matching tea sets were designed by William Edwards and GRECODECO. The Executive Head Chef, Jonathan Howell, is British and brings the best of traditional English afternoon tea together with Sommerro's own art deco style. Award-winning pastry chefs Jared Jiann Lih Chuah and Aziz Muhammad design the menu according to the season, keeping with the classic afternoon tea options of finger sandwiches, scones, and sweets served with sparkling wine or tea. Cocktails are available as well, including non-alcoholic creations. The restaurant boasts a rare, self-playing Steinway Grand Piano, one of the few in Norway, which provides a soundtrack of loved and known tunes compiled by the hotel's in-house music curator and jazz pianist, Maren Selvaag. Afternoon tea at To Søstre is served Thursday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver (1939) Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

For over a century, Fairmont Hotels across Canada have delighted generations of guests with their respective afternoon tea services and afternoon tea has been served at Fairmont Hotel Vancouver since the hotel opened in 1939. An afternoon tea menu from the 1930s, preserved in the hotel archives, reveals the longstanding traditional menu: the hotel offered toasted raisin scones with preserves, assorted fancy sandwiches, parfait, lady fingers, and tea or coffee for 50 cents. In 2016, the hotel relaunched its longstanding traditional afternoon tea service as a rotating themed afternoon tea. The hotel wanted to maintain the cherished tradition while offering guests a new experience. The afternoon tea theme changes four times per year, and the culinary team at the hotel's Notch8 restaurant offers a playful mix of traditional and innovative tea fare to match each theme. Past themes include Old World Carnival, Silver Screen, Enchanted Forest, Chocolate Laboratory, and Chess. The current afternoon tea celebrates Lunar New Year, and is available Thursday through Sunday, from January 6 through February 19, 2023. Fairmont Hotel Vancouver's afternoon tea service offers Fairmont's Lot 35 tea collection featuring caffeinated, decaffeinated, and herbal options, sustainably farmed and ethically sourced. Notch8's afternoon tea fare changes to match each theme, but always includes two flavors of scones served with chantilly cream and a fruit preserve. The savory and sweet fare often includes modern tea sandwiches and pastries but adapts to fit each theme and in the case of the current Lunar New Year theme, includes a pork dumpling with salmon roe. Afternoon tea is offered Thursday through Sunday, with seatings at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

The Murray Hong Kong (1969) Hong Kong, China

The Murray Hong Kong, a member of Historic Hotels Worldwide since 2019, dates to 1969 and is a monument to midcentury modern architecture located in Hong Kong, China's Central District. Winner of the Historic Hotels Worldwide Awards of Excellence Best Historic Hotels Worldwide Hotel in Asia/Pacific in 2022, The Murray Hong Kong boasts some of the city's best restaurants offering the most memorable dining and lifestyle experiences in the city. Afternoon tea at the Garden Lounge of The Murray offers an elegant and relaxing atmosphere, where views of the city including St. John's Cathedral can be seen through the floor-to-ceiling glass windows. The signature afternoon tea is served with a display of sweet and savory bites. Two other venues at The Murray Hong Kong serve afternoon tea: Popinjays and Murray Lane. Popinjays is a contemporary lifestyle rooftop bar and restaurant serving modern European gastronomy, where afternoon tea menus are served daily. Visit the adjoining bar and outdoor terrace for world-class selection of classic cocktails, bespoke creations, and specialty spirits. Murray Lane, a lounge located in the hotel's lofty and light-filled lobby, offers a contemporary environment to enjoy the best selection of premium artisanal spirits, wines and craft beers, and afternoon tea. In addition to traditional afternoon tea menus, The Murray Hong Kong adds variety to its afternoon tea service throughout the year, offering experiences elevated through partnerships and creative themes. In 2022, it collaborated with Christian Louboutin Beauty to offer a bold and stylish afternoon tea buffet defined by red, the color associated with the luxury company. Last year, it also served "A Gent's Afternoon Tea," described as guaranteed to satiate the "manly palates" with options for beer, heavier bites, and larger portions! A Lunar New Year afternoon tea was offered in January-February, and through the end of February 2023 Popinjay's offers the "Birds of a Feather Afternoon Tea." This is a visually captivating buffet spread, filled with flamboyant gastronomic creations by Chef de Cuisine, Lexine Hepworth, to invoke the vibrant colors of avian feathery dress.

"The most romantic and memorable hotels are at Historic Hotels Worldwide, where every day is Valentine's Day. For unique, enjoyable, and unforgettable experiences, consider indulging in The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels Worldwide Afternoon Tea Experiences. Many of the historic hotels featured in our list offer a Valentine's Day tea, a romantic teatime for two. We hope this list will inspire readers looking for an authentic setting and unique experience to celebrate their love any time of the year," said Lawrence Horwitz, Executive Vice President, Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. "Many historic hotels and resorts have served guests afternoon tea since it became fashionable during the Victorian era or have recently revived the stylish meal for guests. An uncommon tradition, afternoon tea is an experience to share."

About Historic Hotels Worldwide®

Historic Hotels Worldwide® is a prestigious and distinctive collection of historic treasures, including luxury historic hotels built in former castles, chateaus, palaces, academies, haciendas,

villas, monasteries, and other historic lodging spanning ten centuries. Historic Hotels Worldwide represents the finest and most distinctive global collection of more than 320 historic hotels in more than 46 countries. Hotels inducted into Historic Hotels Worldwide are authentic historic treasures, demonstrate historic preservation, and celebrate historic significance. Eligibility for induction into Historic Hotels Worldwide is limited to those distinctive historic hotels that adhere to the following criteria: minimum age for the building is 75 years or older; historically relevant as a significant location within a historic district, historically significant landmark, place of a historic event, former home of a famous person, or historic city center; hotel celebrates its history by showcasing memorabilia, artwork, photography, and other examples of its historic significance; recognized by national preservation or heritage buildings organization or located within a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and presently used as historic hotel. For more information, please visit HistoricHotelsWorldwide.com.

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