

Kensington & Hyde Park

KNIGHTSBRIDGE | SOUTH KENSINGTON | HYDE PARK | KENSINGTON GARDENS | CHELSEA & BELGRAVIA | VICTORIA | PIMLICO

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Thumbing through an encyclopaedic A-Z of decorative and design works from across the globe in the **Victoria & Albert Museum** (p176).

2 Becoming hypnotised by the awe-inspiring stone-work and inexhaustible collection of the world-leading

Natural History Museum (p180).

3 Enjoying a picnic in London's green lung, **Hyde Park** (p182).

4 Nurturing a wide-eyed fascination for the perplexities of the world and the cosmos in the electrifying **Science Museum** (p184).

5 Shopping – or just window-shopping! – at the extravagant **Harrods** (p194).



For more detail of this area see Map p424 →

Explore: Kensington & Hyde Park

You can navigate a serious learning-curve or at least catch up on all you forgot since high school at South Kensington's magnificent museums of the arts and sciences. You'll need several days – and considerable calorific reserves – to do them all justice. Museums open at 10am, so you don't have to set your alarm too early, but being near the front of the queue when the doors open gives useful elbow room.

Shoppers will make an eager beeline for Knightsbridge, Harrods and Harvey Nichols, but there are tranquil shopping escapes – such as John Sandoe Books – to sidestep the maddening crowds.

Earmark a sight-packed day for a visit to Hyde Park and conjoined Kensington Gardens – crucial to see why Londoners love their green spaces. Begin by exploring the opulence of Apsley House before walking across the park, via the Serpentine, to the Albert Memorial, Royal Albert Hall and Kensington Palace.

Outstanding restaurants will be with you every step of the way: Kensington, Knightsbridge and Chelsea take their dining particularly seriously, so some of your fondest memories could well be gastronomic, whether you're grazing, snacking or plain feasting.

Local Life

- ➔ **Hang-outs** Join Londoners swooning before the lawn of Fulham Palace (p188), linger over coffee and cake at Tomtom Coffee House (p193) or snap your fingers with local jazz hounds at the swinging 606 Club (p194).
- ➔ **Museums** Late-night Fridays at the Victoria & Albert (p176) mean fewer crowds (especially children) and locals can get a look-in.
- ➔ **Parks** When the sun's out, Londoners dust off their shades, get outdoors to expanses of green like Hyde Park (p182) and lie on the grass reading chunky novels.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Underground** Kensington and Hyde Park are well connected to the rest of London via stations at South Kensington, Sloane Sq, Victoria, Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner. The main lines are Circle, District, Piccadilly and Victoria.
- ➔ **Bus** Handy routes include 74 from South Kensington to Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner; 52 from Victoria to High St Kensington; 360 from South Kensington to Sloane Sq and Pimlico; and 11 from Fulham Broadway to King's Road, Sloane Sq and Victoria.
- ➔ **Bicycle** Santander Cycles (p67) are very handy for pedal-powering your way in, out and around the neighbourhood.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Catch the Queen's Life Guard (Household Cavalry) departing for Horse Guards Parade at 10.28am (9.28am Sundays) from Hyde Park Barracks for the daily Changing of the Guard, performing a ritual that dates to 1660. They troop via Hyde Park Corner, Constitution Hill and the Mall. It's not as busy as the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace and you can get closer to the action.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Tom's Kitchen (p189)
- ➔ Rabbit (p192)
- ➔ Dinner by Heston Blumenthal (p191)
- ➔ Launceston Place (p191)
- ➔ Pimlico Fresh (p192)

For reviews, see p189 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Tomtom Coffee House (p193)
- ➔ Phene (p193)
- ➔ Queen's Arms (p193)
- ➔ Buddha Bar (p193)
- ➔ Anglesea Arms (p193)

For reviews, see p193 ➔

Best Shopping

- ➔ Harrods (p194)
- ➔ Conran Shop (p194)
- ➔ Slightly Foxed on Gloucester Road (p195)
- ➔ British Red Cross (p194)
- ➔ Pickett (p195)

For reviews, see p194 ➔