

# Kensington & Hyde Park

KNIGHTSBRIDGE | KENSINGTON | HYDE PARK | CHELSEA | BELGRAVIA | VICTORIA | PIMLICO

## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Culturally immersing yourself in the riveting **Victoria & Albert Museum** (p183) with its astonishing collection of decorative and design works.
- 2 Sizing yourself up next to the awesome diplodocus skeleton in the **Natural History Museum** (p187).
- 3 **Shopping** (p199) till dropping in Knightsbridge's big-name department stores or turning up surprises in the shops along the King's Road (p193).
- 4 Nurturing a wide-eyed fascination for the mysteries of the world and the cosmos in the **Science Museum** (p190).
- 5 **Dining** (p195) out at some of London's best-loved, most diverse and most mouth-watering restaurants.



For more detail of this area, see Map p440 ➔

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Catch the Queen's Life Guard (Household Cavalry) departing for Horse Guards Parade at 10.32am (9.32am on Sunday) 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.

### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Zuma (p196)
- ➔ Gordon Ramsay (p197)
- ➔ Dinner by Heston Blumenthal (p196)
- ➔ Launceston Place (p195)
- ➔ Penny Black (p197)

For reviews, see p195 ➔

### Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Galvin at Windows (p198)
- ➔ Drayton Arms (p198)
- ➔ Orangery (p196)
- ➔ 606 Club (p198)

For reviews, see p198 ➔

### Best Museums

- ➔ Victoria & Albert Museum (p183)
- ➔ Natural History Museum (p187)
- ➔ Science Museum (p190)

For reviews, see p190 ➔

## Explore: Kensington & Hyde Park

With its triumvirate of top museums, South Kensington is compulsory sightseeing land and you'll need several days to do it all justice. Museums open at 10am, so a super-early start is unnecessary, but being there when the doors open provides useful elbow room. With its excellent range of hotels in every budget bracket, South Kensington is also a handy and good-looking part of town in which to hang your hat.

Shoppers will adore the King's Road, mixing with the well-heeled up to Knightsbridge and Harrods via Sloane St, but there are escapes from the crowds, such as the tranquil Chelsea Physic Garden.

Earmark a sight-packed day for a visit to Hyde Park and conjoined Kensington Gardens – crucial to see why Londoners love their parks. 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.

Dining is an experience in itself: Kensington, Knightsbridge and Chelsea truly are your oyster, and offer an astonishing breadth and depth of choice, whether you're grazing, snacking or plain feasting.

## Local Life

➔ **Hang-outs** Escape to a literary haven at John Sandoe Books (p199) or rub shoulders with local drinkers at the Drayton Arms (p198).

➔ **Museums** Late-night Fridays at the Victoria & Albert (p183) mean fewer crowds and locals can get a look-in.

➔ **Parks** When the sun is out, Londoners just want to get outdoors to expanses of green like Hyde Park (p192), where they lie on the grass reading chunky novels.

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Underground** Kensington and Hyde Park are excellently connected to the rest of London via stations at South Kensington, Sloane Square, 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, and bus 360 from South Kensington to Sloane Square and Pimlico, and 11 from Fulham Broadway to the King's Road, Sloane Square and Victoria.

➔ **Bicycle** Barclays Cycle (p393) is a very handy scheme for pedal powering your way in, out and around the neighbourhood.

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