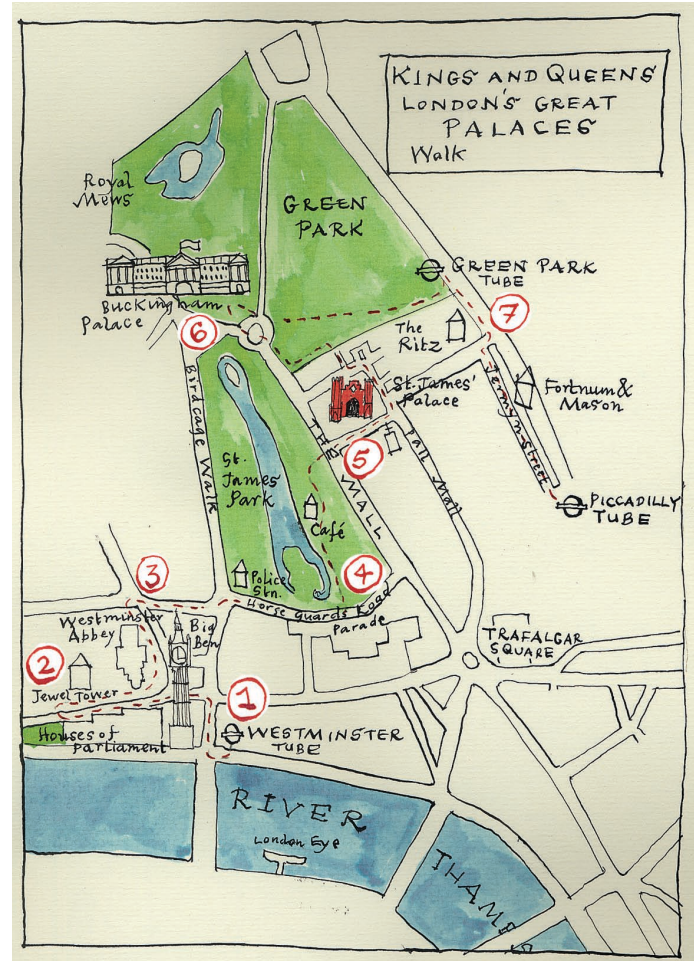


10. Kings and Queens: London's Great Palaces





The Adventure

Be a prince or princess for the day and explore three royal palaces in one walk through history, from the Thames to Green Park. The first is the heart of English politics and power, the Palace of Westminster, now home to the British Government but during the Middle Ages a royal palace. Opposite the Houses of Parliament is the Jewel Tower, one of few remains of the medieval palace. It is a pocket-sized castle keep perfect for a child-sized spoonful of history. Cut through St James's Park, catching the soldiers preparing for the Changing of the Guard at Horse Guards Parade, heading towards the more humble St James's Palace, tucked away behind The Mall, with its fine chapel. Peer through the railings of Buckingham Palace or take the tour of some of its gold-edged, eyebrow-raising interiors. Then head across Green Park for tea at the Ritz or a knickerbocker glory at Fortnum and Mason, grocers to the royal family for centuries.

How far? 4 km/2½ miles

Start Westminster tube **Finish** Green Park tube

Walk the Walk

1. Follow the signs out of the station to exit 1, Westminster Pier. You are greeted with great views of the river and the London Eye. Climb the steps and pop out just opposite Big Ben. Cross Bridge Street and turn right. Along the river front is the Palace of Westminster, now the Houses of Parliament, but between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries home to the kings and queens of England. From 1265, when a parliament was created with two houses, the House of Lords met at the Palace of Westminster, but the House of Commons was not given a permanent home here till 1547. However, the building you are looking at is not the original Palace. This was destroyed by a terrible fire in 1834 and replaced by the present building, designed by Sir Charles Barry and his assistant Augustus Welby Pugin.



Look out for the taxi light on the corner of the building, lit when a Member of Parliament needs a cab. Walk around the front of the building, turning left on Parliament Square. Collect the names of the statues as you go. Look out for Oliver Cromwell, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Richard the Lionheart, Emmeline Pankhurst and George V. At the far end of the building is the Sovereign's Entrance, where the Queen enters once a year, in September, as part of the ceremony of the State Opening of Parliament.

2. Cross the main road at the crossing by Victoria Tower Gardens and double back to see the Jewel Tower. This tower is a perfect place for little ones to get a sense of history. Part of the original medieval palace, it was built in about 1365 as Edward III's privy wardrobe and treasure house. It was once surrounded by a moat, both to protect it and to provide fish for the table. The Jewel Tower, Westminster Hall and the crypt and cloisters of St Stephen's are all that is left of the medieval palace.



Kings and Queens of England

The Normans

William I 1066–1087
 William II 1087–1100
 Henry I 1100–1135
 Stephen 1135–1154

Henry VIII 1509–1547
 Edward VI 1547–1553
 [Lady Jane Grey 1553]
 Mary I 1553–1558
 Elizabeth I 1558–1603

The Plantagenets

Henry II 1154–1189
 Richard I 1189–1199
 John I 1199–1216
 Henry III 1216–1272
 Edward I 1272–1307
 Edward II 1307–1327
 Edward III 1327–1377
 Richard II 1377–1399

The Stuarts

James I 1603–1625
 Charles I 1625–1649
 [Interregnum 1649–1660]
 Charles II 1660–1685
 James II 1685–1688
 William III 1689–1702 and
 Mary II 1689–1694
 Anne 1702–1714

The House of Lancaster

Henry IV 1399–1413
 Henry V 1413–1422
 Henry VI 1422–1461,
 1470–1471

House of Hanover

George I 1714–1727
 George II 1727–1760
 George III 1760–1820
 George IV 1820–1830
 William IV 1830–1837
 Victoria 1837–1901

The House of York

Edward IV 1461–1470,
 1471–1483
 Edward V 1483
 Richard III 1483–1485

Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and The House of Windsor

Edward VII 1901–1910
 George V 1910–1936
 Edward VIII 1936
 George VI 1936–1952
 Elizabeth II 1952–today

The Tudors

Henry VII 1485–1509



If you can't remember all that, try this rhyme to help you memorize them:

Willie, Willie, Harry, Steve
 Harry, Dick, John, Harry Three.
 Edward One, Two, Three, Dick Two
 Henry Four, Five, Six then who?
 Edward Four, Five, Dick the bad
 Harry's twain and Ned the lad.
 Mary, Lizzie, James the vain
 Charlie, Charlie, James again.
 William and Mary, Anne O'Gloria,
 Four Georges, William and Victoria
 Edward Seven, Georgie Five,
 Edward, George and Liz (alive).



Walk out of the Keep and turn left, leaving by the back gate of the Jewel Tower. Turn left again, and walk up the side of Westminster Abbey alongside St Margaret's church.

The Abbey was established by Edward the Confessor and was built as a place for the coronation and burial of kings and queens. It has been the setting for every royal coronation since 1066. Entrance is through the Great North Door, if you want to go in. St Margaret's church is free and worth visiting.

3. Walk around to the West Door, admiring the statues of ten twentieth-century martyrs on the front. Cross Victoria Street at the lights and then the zebra crossing at Tothill Street. Carry on, walking down Storey's Gate. Cross straight over Birdcage Walk and walk all the way down Horse Guards Road. Note the tiny St James's Park police station. If you time it right and reach Horse Guards Parade for 11 a.m. (10 a.m. on Sundays), you will see the Queen's Guards and their horses gathering for the Changing of the Guard.
4. Cross the road at the impressive Guards' Memorial and go into St James's Park. Follow the path around the pond, passing the Inn at the Park café and keeping the pond on your left. Look out for the park's famous pelicans. At the blue bridge, turn right to leave the park through the gilded Marlborough Gates. Cross over the Mall and head down Marlborough Road. Note the lamps with crowns on them.
5. On your left is the red-brick, Tudor-style St James's Palace. This is another good spot to watch the Changing of the Guard, as the soldiers march by at the end of the ceremony, at around midday. You can't visit inside, but the Palace is steeped in history. Charles I spent his last night here before he was marched to Whitehall for his execution. It was the favourite palace of the first three King Georges, but Queen Victoria moved the



royal residence away from here to Buckingham Palace in 1837. St James's Palace is now used as royal offices and grace and favour apartments. You can attend services in the Queen's Chapel, designed by Inigo Jones, across the road. Walk past the palace and turn left on Pall Mall, passing the sentry boxes and the Chapel Royal, also open to the public for services. The heart and bowels of Mary I are buried here.

6. Walk down Cleveland Row, past Selwyn House and down the footpath into Green Park. Turn left towards the Mall, then walk towards the statue of Queen Victoria in front of Buckingham Palace. If the flag is flying, the Queen is at home. When you've peered through the railings at the sentries on duty, or visited the Palace (summers only), turn back and walk beside the gilded gates into Green Park, cutting diagonally right on a path towards the north-east corner, to Piccadilly by the Ritz hotel.



Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot

Remember, remember the fifth of November,
The gunpowder, treason and plot,
I know of no reason
Why the gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot

Down in the cellars, back in 1605, Guy Fawkes and his friends laid barrels of gunpowder in an attempt to blow up Parliament and King James I. They were angry about the treatment of Catholics in England. Guy Fawkes was caught in the act and was duly tortured, hanged, drawn and quartered. His head was placed on a spike on London Bridge. That night, 5 November, bonfires were lit across England to celebrate the survival of the King. Bonfire Night has been celebrated every year since then, with effigies of Guy Fawkes traditionally burnt on a fire.

7. Turn left and hop on the tube at Green Park station. Or turn right to explore the smart streets of Piccadilly and have a well earned treat. If you've booked in advance, you can have tea at the Ritz. Otherwise, try out Fortnum and Mason, grocers to the Queen. Walk down Piccadilly and take a right on to St James's Street. Then turn left on Jermyn Street, and go in through the back door. Buy old-fashioned sweets from a jar, handmade chocolates, or freshly baked English cakes such as Eccles cakes, Bath buns, Battenberg cake and egg custard tarts to take home.

Eat me, drink me

There are plenty of cabins through St James's Park selling snacks and ice-creams, or you can eat a picnic in the park. For a special treat, book (well in advance) a royal tea at the Ritz, 50 Piccadilly, 020 7493 8181 www.theritzlondon.com.

Tea booking line 020 7300 2345. Weekend tea: book 4 months in advance; weekday tea: book 1 month in advance. (And check the dress code.) Or have an ice-cream sundae at the Parlour Restaurant in Fortnum and Mason, 181 Piccadilly. 020 7734 8040 www.fortnumandmason.com

Useful information

- Buckingham Palace Open daily, July to September. 020 7766 7300 www.royal.gov.uk
- Jewel Tower 020 7222 2219 www.english-heritage.org.uk
- Changing of the Guard takes place daily at 11 a.m. (10 a.m. on Sundays) at Horse Guards Parade and at 11.30 a.m. at Buckingham Palace, every day May to July, then on alternate days for the rest of the year. www.royal.gov.uk
- The Houses of Parliament Free advance tickets available from your local MP or Lord (UK residents only). Open to all in the summer holidays. Some tickets available on the day all year. 020 7219 3000 www.parliament.uk

Did you know?

- The Palace of Westminster, also known as the Houses of Parliament, has 1,100 rooms, 100 staircases and 3 miles of corridors.
- The number 2 on the clock at the entrance to Horse Guards Parade is marked with black to commemorate the hour of Charles I's execution.
- In the 1850s Queen Victoria requested Fortnum and Mason to send crates of its famous beef tea to Florence Nightingale in the Crimea for the soldiers.

