



CAFÉ ROYAL TIMES



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See who visited Café Royal over the years ▶

LONDON LEGEND

Café Royal – the place to be seen since 1865. Just ask the countless writers, artists, aristocrats and bon viveurs who have called the legendary haunt home over the past 150 years



WHEN Daniel Nicols founded his small Café-Restaurant in an old oilcloth warehouse behind Regent Street in 1865, he could not have known that it would still be here, in all its glory, more than a century and a half later.

In the decades since Nicols – who was a French émigré – set out his vision for a Parisian-style meeting place in the heart of London, Café Royal has expanded into the surrounding buildings, hosted generations of intellectuals, artists and bon viveurs, and – most recently – been transformed into one of the capital's most luxurious hotels.

If the walls of this legendary London institution could talk, they would tell some eyebrow-raising tales: of the wit of Oscar

Wilde and of tense meetings between Lord Alfred Douglas, the playwright's lover, and his father, the pugilistic Marquess of Queensberry; of black-tie boxing matches held beneath the restaurant's crystal chandeliers; of shadowy Masonic get-togethers presided over by the Prince of Wales; and of the great writers and artists who propped up the bar.

There would be hair-raising stories, too: of an unsolved murder; of dastardly family intrigue; and of art movements born at the café's marble-topped tables.

Café Royal has provided the setting for some of the key moments in the cultural, aesthetic, culinary and social history of London. Here's to the next 150 years.



A right royal café fit for a king – or two

The two princes Edward and George, who would both go on to be King of England – as Edward VIII until his abdication in 1936 and George VI – often lunched together at Café Royal. In the head waiter's Day Book, which contained the dietary requirements of many of London's great and good, was the note: "Always plain food. No fuss. Call head waiter at once and notify manager." If it was good enough for them...



Legend in his own lunchtime

Winston Churchill and Rufus Isaacs. 1st Marquess of Reading and later Viceroy of India, dined together at Café Royal while waiting for a call from the new Liberal Prime Minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Churchill became under secretary of state for the colonies in Campbell-Bannerman's new government from 1905-1908, so beginning one of the 20th century's greatest political careers. The rest is history.



The stars look very different!

David Bowie bids farewell to his alter ego Ziggy Stardust alongside Cat Stevens and other stars at Café Royal following his final Ziggy show at the Hammersmith Odeon, 3 July 1973. SEE PAGE 26

DISAPPEARING ACT REAPPEARS

Known as the Magus of Café Royal, the occultist and poet Aleister Crowley claimed to have a magic cloak that rendered him invisible.

To prove its power, Crowley – who in August 1914 unveiled the monument to Oscar Wilde in Père Lachaise graveyard in Paris – would don a conical hat and the cloak decorated with mystic inscriptions and walk slowly through Café Royal making towards the Glasshouse Street exit.

No one could persuade him that he had not been invisible. "Why," he'd respond, reasonably enough, "didn't anybody speak to me then?"



Aleister Crowley

HOTEL CAFÉ ROYAL OPENED IN 2013 AND IS LOCATED IN THE HEART OF LONDON

Today, Hotel Café Royal is a founding member of The Set hotels, alongside the Conservatorium in Amsterdam and the Lutetia in Paris.



The famous afternoon tea at Café Royal is served in The Grill Room, which was established in 1865



Luke & Matt Goss of pop group Bros talk to Princess Diana, 23 March 1989



Traditional Footwear: The Queen Mother serves at Café Royal in 1950s. French ambassador Jean Chastel did a one-act play in the dining room, a parodying of French life in a French style and when he left.



WHO'S WHO

(6) Actor Dustin Hoffman and his wife at the BAFTA Awards after party, 9 April 2000; (7) Model Erin O'Connor attends the Vogue dinner in honour of Michael Kors, 25 April 2013; (8) singer Nicole Scherzinger, with racing driver Lewis Hamilton and model Naomi Campbell at a party in celebration of Edward Enninfal, 1 December 2014.



CAFÉ ROYAL SAVOURY MENU

SMALL PLATES

Mini Angus beef burgers £18
Mature cheddar cheese, gherkins, mayonnaise, lettuce/650Kcal

Mini falafel burgers (v) £15
Aubergine salsa, gherkins, tahini dressing/225Kcal

Tuna tacos £18
Soya ponzu, yuzu mayonnaise, taco shell/154Kcal

Salmon blinis £16
Scottish smoked salmon, blinis, trout roe, crème fraiche/177Kcal

Buttermilk fried chicken bites £16
Served with sriracha dip/620Kcal

Seasonal vegetable rolls (v) £14
Served with chilli sauce/40Kcal

English pea soup (v) £15
Sour cream, mint/304Kcal

Courgette fries (v) £10
Lime mayonnaise/350Kcal

CAVIAR AND OYSTERS

Caviar £210
30g Oscietra caviar, blinis and accompaniments/244Kcal

Classic Rock Oysters (3 pieces) £18
Mignonette sauce/100Kcal each

Tempura Rock Oysters (3 pieces) £18
Yuzu mayonnaise, Nori dust/150Kcal each

Club sandwich £22
Chicken, bacon (or turkey bacon), egg, tomato, lettuce, French fries/785Kcal

Chicken katsu sandwich £22
Breadcrumbs chicken breast, chinese cabbage slaw, yuzu mayonnaise/370Kcal

Truffle and comte cheese toast (v) £22
Truffle bechamel, comte, pan de mie/797Kcal

Lobster roll £32
Poached lobster, brioche, mayonnaise, lettuce, chives/518Kcal
Add truffle/4Kcal per gram £10

Quinoa and avocado salad (vg) £20
Kale, almonds, broccoli, pomegranate/330Kcal

Hotel Café Royal Caesar salad £18
Baby gem lettuce, Parmigiano Reggiano, anchovies, Burford Brown eggs, Caesar dressing/216Kcal

Spicy Asian salad (vg) £18
Red cabbage, carrots, peppers, chilli, peanuts, tahini sauce/162Kcal

Add To Your Salad:

Fried egg/90Kcal £5
Corn-fed organic chicken/370Kcal £12

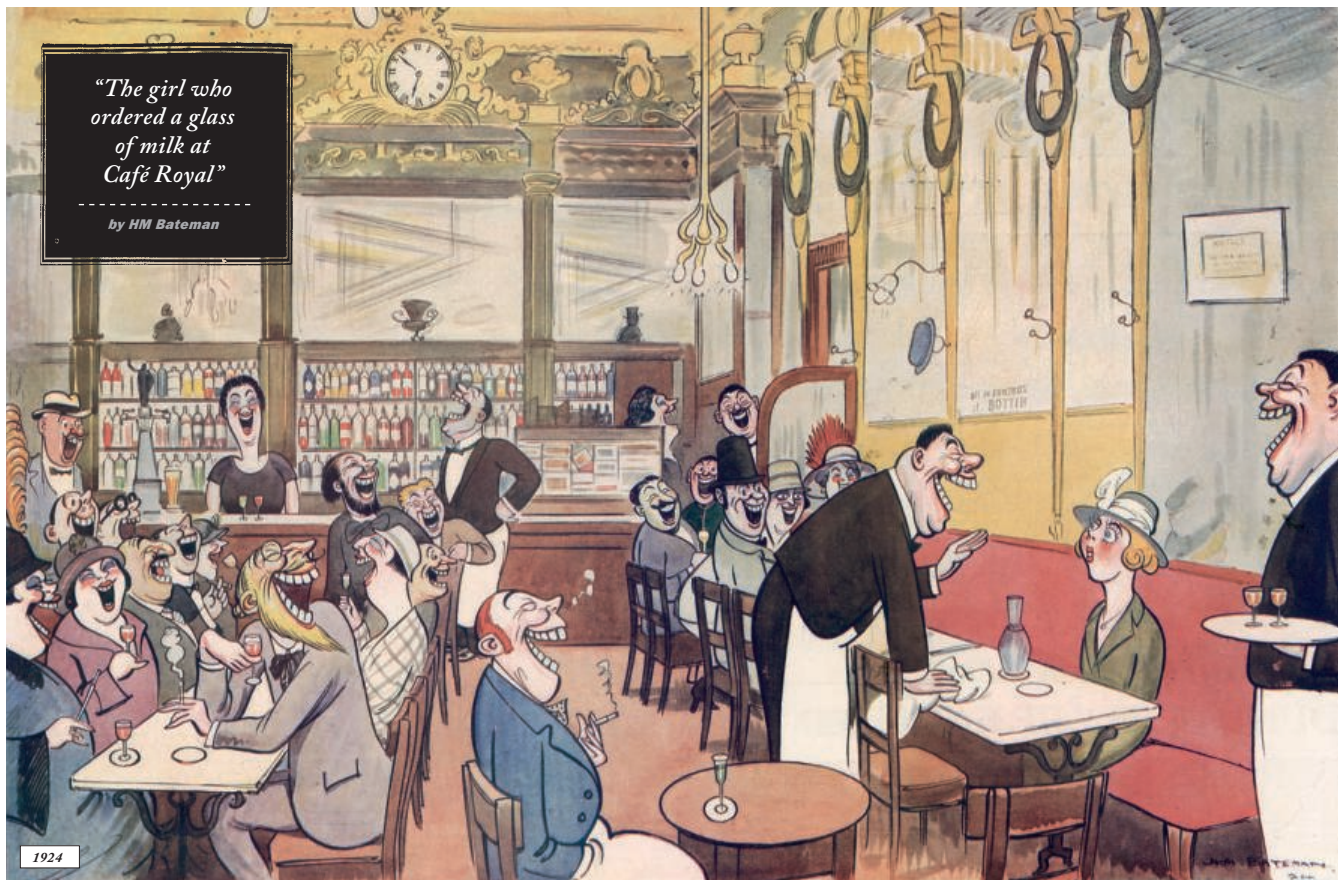
Café Royal Rock Oysters (3 pieces) £18
Ginger, soy, chilli and crispy shallots/140Kcal each

Bloody Mary Rock Oysters (3 pieces) £18
Tomato, celery salt, tabasco, Worcestershire sauce, lemon/120Kcal each

Champagne Rock Oysters (3 pieces) £18
Champagne and crème emulsion, Champagne jelly, lime zest/110Kcal each

(v) - Vegetarian (vg) - Vegan

Adults need around 2000Kcal a day



TODINE FOR

Albert Adrià, the celebrated Spanish chef, opens Cakes & Bubbles at Café Royal

As one of the world's most influential chefs, Albert Adrià first brought his extraordinary brand of gastronomy to Café Royal at the start of 2016. For just 50 days, from February to April, Adrià took up residence at Café Royal to cook outside his native Spain for the first time in his career.

Having instigated a food revolution alongside his brother, Ferran, at the legendary three Michelin star restaurant elBulli, his 50 Days residency at Café Royal took guests on a gastronomic journey that began in the opulent Oscar Wilde Lounge with cocktails and signature snacks, before moving to the refined surroundings of The Domino restaurant for dinner. "I'm not coming to

cook," he said before the residency, "but to create an experience." He wasn't wrong.

Adrià holds four Michelin stars for his restaurants in Barcelona, which form a gastronomic amusement park with six concepts in the same neighbourhood: Tickets, Enigma, Hoja Santa, Pakta, Niño Viejo and Bodega. For his 50 Days residency, he created some eclectic and imaginative dishes: 50 Days Tartar, for example, was presented on an edible spoon made of corn; there was a dish of jellied eel with lobster and violet; and Adrià's take on a traditional Cornish pasty was – naturally enough, given Café

Royal's history – served with absinthe.

Following the success of 50 Days, Adrià – who in 2015 was named the world's best pastry chef in the annual World's 50 Best Restaurants list – once again chose Café Royal as the venue for his first permanent establishment outside of Spain: Cakes & Bubbles, a dessert and Champagne experience, which opened in November 2018.

"One day I woke up and felt it was something that I owed myself," explained Adrià. "It was something that I wanted to do. London and the Hotel Café Royal are simply the best places I could think of to do it."



HIS JUST DESSERTS

The poet and scholar AE Housman, famous for his collection "A Shropshire Lad", was a regular – and knowledgeable – diner at Café Royal.

He had a taste for fine wine and steadily emptied the restaurant's extensive cellar of bottles of Johannisberger '74.

Later, at Trinity College, Cambridge – where Housman was Kennedy Professor of Latin from 1911 until his death in 1936 – the food was obviously not up to the standard he had come to expect from his visits to Café Royal.

Housman left numerous comments in the college's Kitchen Suggestions Book such as: "We have a great number of unattractive sweets at dinner: why not cheesecake sometimes for a change?"

Although lacking poetry, the notes must have had an effect. When the kitchens were overhauled, Housman ensured a Café Royal chef was brought in.