LUXURY IS GREAT BRITAIN

A guide for international media
October 2014

Harrods
Knightsbridge, London

visitbritain.com/media
Discover Luxury Britain

**Bespoke perfume – Floris**
Create a personalised fragrance at Floris, the only perfumer to hold a Royal Warrant from none other than The Queen.
florislondon.com

**Travel Northern Ireland by Supercar**
Take in iconic sites such as the Giant’s Causeway, the Mountains of Morne and Belfast in a supercar, from convertible Ferraris to Jaguar F-Types and Audi Spiders.
supercarsondemand.com

**Tee Off In Style**
Founded in 1886, Royal Lytham and St Annes golf course has twice hosted the Ryder Cup and is considered one of the premier links courses in the world - improve your handicap at this prestigious course.
royallytham.org

**See opera in the English countryside**
Posh festivalgoers in black-tie socialise over an opulent picnic before taking their seats for big-scale operas by the likes of Puccini and Mozart.
glyndebourne.com

**Sleep in a Welsh castle**
Wales has more than 600 castles countrywide. Sample the luxury of a past era and step back in time at Ruthin Castle, which dates back to the legend of King Arthur.
ruthincastle.co.uk

**Experience Royal Ascot from a private box**
See and be seen in a private box with spectacular views over the world-famous race course.
royalascotviphospitality.co.uk

**Coast around Scotland on the Hebridean Princess**
Queen Elizabeth herself has enjoyed family holidays on board the Hebridean Princess twice: leisurely itineraries include bird watching on remote islands and visits to great castles and gardens.
hebridean.co.uk

**Be pampered at a ‘grown-ups only’ hotel**
With a state-of-the-art eco-spa, the highlight of The Scarlet is the cliff-top outdoor pool and hot tubs with panoramic views across the sea.
scarlethotel.co.uk

**Soar in a seaplane**
Exploring the magnificent Scottish West Coast by iconic seaplane is one of the world’s greatest journeys. Board a spacious seaplane and take a First Class window seat for an exhilarating view of the wild landscape.
lochlomondseaplanes.com

**Fly a private balloon at The Bristol Balloon Fiesta**
Take in panoramic views of beautiful Bristol and its rolling cityscape. Top the dream-like experience off with a glass of the finest chilled champagne on touchdown.
baileyballoons.co.uk

**Arrive at Royal Residence Sandringham in style**
Enjoying brunch and bellinis on board - with the Belmond British Pullman, a luxury train that takes you from London to Norfolk.
belmond.com/british-pullman-train
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**Luxury is GREAT - why?**

Britain has developed a taste for luxury over the centuries and perfected the art of showcasing its elegant side to visitors. Enjoy fashionable restaurants, shopping and culture, hire historical castles and country houses to stay and play at, take a classic car for a spin around the countryside. Get a taste for the life lived by royalty and the aristocracy at the key dates of the social calendar, from Royal Ascot to Wimbledon. And when it comes to shopping, seek out the royal crest above shop doors to unlock the highest quality products favoured by none other than The Queen.

**Luxurious stays**

From staying at a Scottish castle to taking tea at a beautiful country house in Wales, there are unique, talking-point places to stay all over Britain. Those with more modern tastes could choose hot new London hotel Ham Yard, which boasts a bowling alley, private cinema and designer rooms, while nature-lovers can hire out a luxury treehouse in the beautiful English countryside at Chewton Glen, or Harptree.

*Read about indulgent accommodation on p3.*

**Luxurious dining and drinking**

Fine dining in Britain is an all-day affair. Breakfast like a king at Gleneagles, Scotland’s famous golf hotel, lunch at one of the nation’s brilliant Michelin-starred restaurants - or even a Michelin-starred gastropub, like The Treby Arms in Devon - and dine in style at glamorous eateries like Chiltern Firehouse in London, where fashion week parties take off in style and hot models-of-the-moment are frequently spotted.

*Find out about decadent dining in Britain on p12.*

**Luxurious shopping**

Hire a personal shopper to tailor the delights of world-famous departments stores to your tastes – Harrods, Liberty, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges are temples to high fashion, homewares and unique British products. Look for the royal crest on shopfronts and products all over Britain - these are suppliers to The Royal Household. Men wanting a stylish edge should head to Savile Row for the world’s best in tailoring, and plenty more Royal Warrant Holders.

*Plan your shopping itinerary with our luxury shopping guide starting on p18.*

**Luxurious experiences**

Soaring in a seaplane over the stunning Loch Lomond in Scotland, or enjoying true indulgence with lunch aboard the Belmond British Pullman - sister train to the Orient Express - are unforgettable experiences. Or how about attending Royal Ascot, where haute couture hats meet horse racing and the Royals attend?

*Read about luxury travel experiences from p32 and the British ‘season’ from p48.*
Indulgent accommodation
Sleep like a king or queen in a castle, try out the hottest new hotels in the city, feel the fresh country air from your stately pile, opt for all-out exclusivity and hire a whole property. Luxury really means luxury in Britain - here's our pick of ten places to stay in style each in London, England, Scotland and Wales.

LONDON
Go for the buzz: Ham Yard Hotel, Soho
In the heart of bustling Soho, the newly opened Ham Yard Hotel revolves around a tree filled pedestrian thoroughfare, complete with specially-designed bronze sculpture. Kick-back in the sumptuous drawing room and library, relax in the ‘Soholistic Spa’, or be entertained in the state-of-the art theatre and original 1950s bowling alley imported from Texas. To top it off, a charming rooftop garden has sweeping views across London.

Go for panoramic views: Shangri-La at The Shard, London Bridge
Located in the tallest building in Western Europe on floors 34 to 52, Shangri-La at The Shard is London's first high-rise hotel, with breathtaking views of the Houses of Parliament, Tower of London and St. Paul's Cathedral. Featuring modern Chinese art and mood lighting, all rooms offer the exclusive “Shangri-La Bed” featuring patented body-contouring technology and marble-clad bathrooms with heated floors A butler service is offered in all suites.

Go for opulence: Park Lane’s Intercontinental Hotel, Mayfair
The opulent Royal Suite in Park Lane’s Intercontinental Hotel is the most expensive suite in the capital. Four interconnecting rooms look out over the Royal Parks while the master bedroom enjoys a flora-lined satin canopy bed and ensuite with cream Calcutta marble, antique mirrors and By Royal Appointment amenities from Penhaligons. Try the famous Afternoon Tea, which is immaculately served in the Wellington Lounge, with a view of London's Wellington Arch from every seat.

Go for pedigree: Claridge’s, Mayfair
Royalty, celebrities, tycoons, fashionistas all stay in the bosom of luxury at this terracotta-faced pile designed by the same architect who later built Harrods department store. An Art Deco makeover in the late 1920s set the stage for fun and all 203 rooms are unique with specially-commissioned suites designed by Viscount Linley and Diane von Furstenburg. Slip off to
the health club and roof-top spa offering Sisley treatments and sip cocktails in Fumoir, a 1930s jewel-box bar with original Lalique glass panels.

www.claridges.co.uk

Go with children: Cliveden Place, Belgravia

Take the keys for the front door of this Georgian storybook mansion in Sloane Square and you’ll find a children’s paradise that will keep adults happy too. A playroom bursting with boys’ toys, four bedrooms filled with teddies, four-posters, Chinese cabinets and antique rocking horses, stay in the ultimate five-storey family home and live like a London native, popping out to designer boutiques, chic restaurants and the West End.

www.onefinestay.com

Go for city cool: Shoreditch Rooms, Shoreditch

The hotel arm of Shoreditch House exclusive members’ club is a converted warehouse in London’s trendy East End. All rooms have bespoke furniture and fittings, including old-fashioned telephones, tallboy-chests, digital radios, televisions and wooden shutters, bathrooms stocked with fresh Cowshed products and powerful rainforest showers and balconies with city views. The rooftop pool is the place to see and be seen, with restaurant, bar and great views of London.

www.shoreditchrooms.com

Go for relaxation: The Chelsea Harbour Hotel, Chelsea

An oasis in the bustling London metropolis, London’s only 5*, all-suite hotel is situated on the marina at Chelsea Harbour. Take in the calming Thames views from the huge Kings Penthouse suite balcony then pay a visit to upmarket Kings Road for some shopping. Let the relaxation continue at the Blue Harbour Health Club and Spa before dining at the Chelsea Riverside Brasserie with its superb views across the marina.

www.thechelseaharbourhotel.com

Go for old-school glamour: The Ritz, Piccadilly

A world famous luxury hotel with a glittering reputation due to its impeccable service, roof terrace looking across Green Park and fine food (particularly the Afternoon Tea served in The Palm Court, where formal attire is required). Guests staying in the Signature Suites can take advantage of complimentary airport transfers in a Rolls-Royce and also benefit from the attentive service of a designated butler, available around the clock to ensure every need is met.

www.theritzlondon.com

Go for a super yacht experience: Sunborn London, Royal Victoria Dock

The impressive 108-metre floating hotel has 136 spacious guest rooms, all with bespoke furnishings, plus an elegant restaurant, lounge bar, day spa and expansive views of Canary Wharf. The Executive Suite has underfloor heating, Molton Brown toiletries and river views.
framed by large french windows that lead on to a private terrace with polished timber sundecks. Dedicated room and concierge service make it an exclusive experience.

www.sunbornhotels.com

Go for the river view: The Savoy, The Strand

Arguably one of the finest riverside views not just in London but across the world, the recently refurbished Royal Suite is spread over the front of the entire 5th floor and looks out onto the London Eye. With its marble foyer, wood-panelled office, walk-in dressing room with cedar-lined wardrobes, a his and hers bathroom with a deep, soaking tub and a service kitchen (ideal if travelling with a personal chef), it really is fit for a King.

www.fairmont.com

ENGLAND

Go for foodie delights: Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Oxford, South East England

For a luxury foodie retreat, star-chef Raymond Blanc’s hotel and restaurant tops the list. The two-Michelin star restaurant is the focus of most visits but the orchards and serene English water garden aren’t to be missed. Rooms are individually decorated with opulent fabrics, queen-size beds and marble baths. The Mon Plaisir Deluxe Courtyard room has silhouettes of seductive female forms adorning the walls while an open, wood-burning fireplace in front of the bed makes for a romantic retreat.

www.manoir.com

Go for film fun: Stoke Park, Buckinghamshire, South East England

Only 45 minutes from London, this county house-style hotel offers a tranquil retreat set in Capability Brown’s sculpted gardens and was used as the location for films including Goldfinger and Layer Cake. There’s a famous golf course, a sumptuous spa and two restaurants. Stay in the Pennsylvania executive suite - featured in the hit movie 'Bridget Jones's Diary' - furnished with fine art, priceless antiques, king size bed, seating area in front of an open fire, marble bathroom with under-floor heating and roll top baths.

www.stokepark.com

Go for golf: Belfry, Birmingham, Midlands

Nestled in over 500 acres of rolling countryside yet only 20 minutes from Birmingham International Airport, Belfry is an easy getaway to indulge your passion for golf in stunning surroundings. Follow in the footsteps of golf’s greatest and play the famous Brabazon golf course, which has hosted 4 Ryder Cup matches. You needn't be a golf fanatic to enjoy the hotel’s gorgeous suites, with sleek bathrooms, rich fabrics, sumptuous beds and your own private balcony with views of the courses.

www.thebelfry.co.uk

After a Michelin-starred meal, sleep like a king at Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons
Go for art-deco fantasy: Burgh Island, Devon, South West England

For an indulgent fantasy straight out of a Bond film, it would be hard to better this 1920s art deco palace on a private island off south Devon, accessible at high tide only by sea tractor. Full of authentic furniture and period charm, the hotel also has its own helicopter pad and all the 21st-century amenities. Book the newly restored Beach House, formerly a retreat for Edward Windsor and Wallis Simpson, for the best views.

www.burghisland.com

Go for a spa break: Seaham Hall, Co Durham, North East England

This upmarket boutique hotel on England's North East coast is home to a decadent spa, connected by private underground tunnel. Choose from a 20-metre ozone-cleansed swimming pool, a black granite steam room, plunge pools, an ice fountain and a traditional Turkish hammam. The luxury continues at the hotel, where you can indulge in award-winning food and kick back in your Kenzo-furnished bedroom.

www.seaham-hall.com

Go for quirky style: Brooks Guesthouse, Bristol, South West England

For a totally unique experience, stay in one of four vintage Airstream-style caravans on the rooftop of this stylish 23-bed guesthouse. Featuring 5ft pocket sprung mattresses dressed with goose down pillows and duvets, flat screen TVs and fluffy cotton towels, it’s the best in quirky luxury.

www.brooksguesthousebristol.com

Go for a sense of history: Titanic Hotel, Liverpool, North West England

Newly opened Titanic Hotel Liverpool is the result of a £36 million transformation of the North Warehouse at Stanley Dock. Huge rooms (which at one time stored rubber and tobacco) retain the original brick and iron features of the warehouse. The 72 square foot Presidential Suite has a superior deluxe double bed, drench shower, Neal’s Yard toiletries, flat screen TV and entertainment centre, a separate lounge and entertainment area and deep tub bath.

www.titanichotelliverpool.com

Go for glamping: The Yurt Retreat, Somerset, South West England

For a different kind of luxury, stay on a working organic farm in a lush corner of Somerset. The yurts fan out from the communal lodge and firepit, with trees forming a leafy backdrop and each comes with a wood-burning stove and a separate, cedar-panelled bathroom. Perfect for those who love the joy of the outdoors but who can’t resist home-comforts and all-important style.

www.theyurtretreat.co.uk
Go for horse-riding: Lucknam Park, Bath, South West England

Ticking all the boxes: award-winning spa, Michelin-starred restaurant, 500-acre estate and even a cookery school, the thing that really sets Luckham Park apart is its equestrian centre. 35 horses of all sizes and capabilities are available to ride and the centre also runs specialist clinics with top riders from the world of show jumping and dressage. After a day riding in the countryside, relax in the stately four-poster bed in the Grand Master Suite.

www.lucknampark.co.uk

Go for romance: Chewton Glen, The New Forest, Southern England

It’s impossible not to feel like pampered royalty at this world-renowned boutique hotel in Hampshire. Combining old-school elegance with a modern sensibility this hotel, spa, restaurant and country club is as seductive as it is suave. Opt for a secluded and peaceful treehouse suite hidden in the grounds in a wooded valley with panoramic forest views.

www.chewtonglen.com

WALES

Go for the food: The Grove Narberth, Pembrokeshire, South West Wales

The Country House vibe of The Grove thrilled the Robin Hood cast, including Cate Blanchett, who booked in to one of the four private cottages close to the main house, surrounded by beautiful Pembrokeshire countryside. Chef Duncan’s dishes have been described as works of art, with many of the ingredients coming straight from the hotel’s kitchen garden.

www.thegrove-narberth.co.uk

Go for a childhood dream: Living Room Treehouse, Powys, Mid Wales

Floating 40ft above the forest are five luxurious treehouses on a 200 acre sheep farm nestled in a hidden valley in the heart of the Welsh mountains. Built to blend seamlessly with the beautiful woodlands, each treehouse has a cosy wood-burning stove. Think flickering candles, fast flowing streams, wobbly bridges, whirling red kites and breathtaking walks.

www.living-room.co

Go for modern design in a historic setting: Roch Castle, Pembrokeshire, South West Wales

A Norman castle originally built in the 12th century by the knight Adam de Rupe, Roch Castle is now home to a luxury 5-star hotel with panoramic views over the Irish Sea, Welsh mountains and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Clean and modern decor mixes with quirky features such as original curved walls in the six double bedrooms which include 300 thread count linens, wifi and iPod dock and Philip Stark bathrooms with the hotel’s own brand of hypoallergenic toiletries.

www.rochcastle.com
Go for the view from the pool: St Brides Hotel, Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire, South West Wales

Pembrokeshire’s only spa hotel has the enviable accolade of having stunning views from its infinity pool, from which you can gaze out at the wide and sandy beaches of Saundersfoot, a small, characterful seaside resort. Rooms have luscious throws by Welsh label Melin Tregwynt and splashes of contemporary Welsh art, much of which is for sale.

www.stbridesspahotel.com

Go for wine: Llanerch Vineyard, Pendoylan, Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales

A working Welsh vineyard located in the heart of the picturesque Glamorganshire countryside, just 20 minutes from Cardiff, Llanerch is the perfect spot for wine-lovers. Tour the sloping hills of the 22 acre estate, be culinarily inspired with a cookery class, or simply unwind and immerse yourself in the beautiful South Welsh countryside. The Cariad Suite sits at the top of the farmhouse and offers the best views of the vineyard, plus a roll-top bath and The White Company products.

www.llanerch-vineyard.co.uk

Go for Edwardian luxury: Llangoed Hall, Llyswen, Powys, Mid Wales

Offering the quintessential Edwardian country house experience, every one of Llangoed Hall’s 23 bedrooms has been individually designed and furnished with intriguing antiques and original works of art. Each room comes with a decanter of sherry, fresh fruit and selection of waters and many have grand four-poster beds.

www.llangoedhall.co.uk

Go for character: Chateau Rhianfa, Anglesey, North West Wales

For a uniquely theatrical experience, spend a night in this French Chateau overlooking the Menai Straits. Like a fairytale palace, the Grade II listed building, modelled on a French Renaissance château, was built in 1849 as an aristocratic country retreat. With tapestries and telescopes, portraits and painted ceilings, chandeliers and gilded mirrors, statues and stained glass windows, Château Rhianfa doesn’t do minimalism, though the suites (with vast beds) have contemporary bathrooms and a ‘vintage-modern’ style.

www.amazingvenues.co.uk

Go for beautiful eccentricity: Portmeirion, north Wales

An enchanting village unlike anywhere you’ll have ever been, with a gorgeous hotel as its centrepiece. Architect Sir William Clough Ellis created the Italianate village in north Wales between 1925-1975 and, as well as the pastel-coloured buildings and dinky little alleyways, you’ll be stunned by the rhododendrons and exotic plants. Go in Spring or Autumn when
the colours are magical, or in summer when you can take a dip in the sea. The Portmeirion Hotel is one of the quirkiest luxury hotels you’ll ever experience.


Go for eco-luxury: The Yurt Farm, Tregaron, Ceredigion, Mid Wales

It’s the little touches that make the rotund little pods at the Yurt Farm such a fine example of how to do glamping properly. With four-poster beds fashioned out of trees, a basket of vegetables and eggs from the farm, Welsh woolen blankets, fresh flowers and candles and organic mattresses, it’s certainly offbeat, off-the-beaten-track living in a quiet corner of a large organic farm.

www.theyurtfarm.co.uk

Go for eccentricity: Glandyfi Castle, near Aberystwyth, Mid Wales

Glandyfi Castle, with its towers, turrets, ramparts and octagonal rooms (not to mention spectacular views over the mountains of Snowdonia) is quirky, romantic and unforgettable. Stay in the Osprey room, with its original painted cornices, king size four poster bed, views of the estuary and a circular Jacuzzi bath in an octagonal room.

www.glandyficastle.co.uk

SCOTLAND

Go for quintessential Scotland: Fonab Castle, Pitlochry

Turrets, parquet floors, wood-paneling and tartan are in abundance at this newly opened baronial retreat. The Castle’s flagship Penthouse offers beautiful views over the highlands and features a high, vaulted wooden ceiling and original panelled walls, an And-So-To-Bed 7’ Dickens Nickel bed (for which a set of steps even provided) and muted velvet creams with Ulf Moritz glass studded wallpaper.

www.fonabcastlehotel.com

Go for golf: Gleneagles, Perthshire

Named Best Golf Resort in the World for the last three years, Gleneagles is any golfer’s dream. Set in 850 acres of Perthshire countryside, it’s home to three of the top Scottish Championship golf courses, where you can swing a club on the same grass as Ryder Cup players. Unwind with dinner at Andrew Fairlie’s two Michelin Star restaurant before dreaming of the epic breakfast (with three types of smoked salmon) that awaits in a suite complete with breathtaking views, tartan furnishings and open fire-places.

www.gleneagles.com

Go for privacy: Links House, Dornoch

With just eight sumptuous rooms, each named after famous Scottish salmon rivers and individually decorated with Italian-marble bathrooms and hand-picked antiques, Links House is the perfect place for an exclusive house party. Enjoy the freedom of having your
very own private country manor home, complete with wood-panelled library, open fires and grand antler chandeliers.

www.linkshousedornoch.com

Go for city cool: Blytheswood Square Hotel, Glasgow

Gaze out over the rooftops of Glasgow city-centre from the magnificent Penthouse Suite Apartment, which sits majestically atop Blytheswood Square Hotel. The new hotel suite, with its own lift, furnished rooftop terrace, private bar and marble bathroom is the height of city cool. The ‘Penthouse Package’ is £1500 per night and includes a bottle of Dom Perignon 2003, spa treatments and bathrobes to take home.

www.townhousecompany.com/blythswoodsquare

Go for character: Prestonfield House, Edinburgh

Built in 1687 as the grand baroque home of Lord Provost, Prestonfield has been at the heart of Scotland's artistic, social, business and political life for four centuries. Opulent and theatrical, historic architecture and an extensive collection of art and antiques combine in the rich and colourful décor of each of the 23 rooms and suites. Set in twenty acres of gardens and parkland yet only five minutes from Edinburgh’s Royal Mile, Prestonfield is truly unique.

www.prestonfield.com

Go for exclusivity: Skibo Castle, Scottish Highlands

In a secluded corner of Scotland's eastern highlands sits Skibo Castle, home to one of the world's most prestigious private clubs: The Carnegie Club. The allure of the landscape (Skibo means 'Fairyland of Peace') has drawn Rudyard Kipling, the Rockefellers, and even King Edward VII to all spend the night. Madonna also enjoyed the hotel's discreet hospitality during her nuptials to Guy Richie.

www.carnegieclub.co.uk/index.html

Go for a magical setting: Kinloch Lodge, Skye

Charming, cosy and discreetly luxurious Kinloch Lodge, nestled at the foot of Kinloch Hill on the wildly romantic Isle of Skye, is deserving of its title as one of the world’s top 25 small hotels by Conde Naste Traveller Magazine. Bedrooms feature superking-size beds, cosy lambswool blankets, homemade shortbread, books from Lord Macdonald's library, roll-top baths and toiletries by L'Occitane. The hotel can also be hired for exclusive for total privacy.

www.kinloch-lodge.co.uk

Go for outdoor pursuits: Inverlochy Castle, Fort William and Lochaber

Nestling in the foothills of the mighty Ben Nevis, Inverlochy Castle (a previous winner of the Scottish Hotel of the Year award), sits amidst some of Scotland's finest scenery. Take
advantage of the beautiful grounds and surrounding mountains with bespoke experiences arranged by the hotel including fishing on the loch, clay pigeon shooting, falconry display, hiking, mountain biking, pony trekking and skiing - with two ski centres to choose from.

www.inverlochycastlehotel.com

Go for unforgettable dining: The Three Chimneys and The House Over-By, Skye

Hide away from it all on the shores of Loch Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, where you’ll find one of Scotland's most highly-regarded restaurants: the tiny The Three Chimneys. Set within the 100-year-old bare stone walls of an original island croft house, it serves seasonal produce home-grown on the island. Next door The House Over-By has six sumptuous suites, all with six-foot wide king-size beds, double-ended bathtub, Temple Spa toiletries, warm bathrobes, sea view and path to the shore.

www.threechimneys.co.uk

Go for a spa break: Stobo Castle, Peebles

Watch the sun set over the Scottish hills while relaxing in the pool at Stobo, Scotland's only destination spa. A 200-year-old castle in the Scottish borders yet only half an hour from Edinburgh, Stobo offers the ultimate in luxury. The newly opened Cashmere Suite features bedroom walls dressed in rich claret coloured cashmere and a breathtaking cream bath handcrafted from one piece of limestone.

www.stobocastle.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

Go for the glamour: The Merchant Hotel, Belfast

Victorian grandeur meets Art Deco design at Belfast's beautiful five star hotel. It's slap bang in the trendy Cathedral Quarter, surrounded by bars and restaurants - but the bar in the hotel itself is a must-visit, oozing jazz and serving a mean Old Fashioned. The hotel also houses Harper, an exclusive fashion boutique stocking Valentino, Celine and Christian Louboutin. Unwind at the spa, where there’s a champagne nail bar for pre-night out pampering.

www.themerchanthotel.com

Go for the luxurious spa: Galgorm Resort & Spa, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

Set in lush parkland only 30 minutes from Belfast, Galgorm Resort and Spa is styled as a country gentleman's residence, decked out with luxurious suites and a gorgeous River Room conservatory in which to enjoy Afternoon Tea. The Spa is the star here, featuring thermal spa, an infinity hydrotherapy pool and outdoor hot tubs. You can also spa 'Roman style’ with ice fountains, a herb caldarium and Laconium, to really transform your mind, body and soul.

www.galgorm.com
Go for picture perfection: Lough Erne Resort, Fermanagh

One of the most beautiful settings in the world - Lough Erne is set in the fantasy land that is Fermanagh, one of Northern Ireland's most picturesque counties. This five star hotel offers it all - a championship golf course, a gorgeous spa, grounds to take your breath away and opulently decorated rooms and suites with views over Castle Hume Lough and the Faldo Championship Golf Course. Rooms feature luxury Egyptian cotton towels and Irish bed linen, as well as binoculars so you can appreciate the stunning surroundings.

www.lougherneresort.com

Go for the food and welcome: Newforge House, County Armagh

This family owned mansion is faultlessly run as a guesthouse, and has had praise heaped on it by all who have stayed there to recharge their batteries, eat to their heart's content and enjoy the Armagh countryside, kicking off with the lush gardens and fields surrounding the house. There's a real focus on food - all of which is sourced locally and cooked to perfection. There are just six rooms, so book ahead.

www.newforgehouse.com

Go for a country house atmosphere: Ardtara Country House

Ardtara was the home of linen magnate Harry Clarke - whose Linen Mill, now 250 years old, still runs - and the property exudes the lavishness of a man at the top of his game in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The hotel is a proper country house, where the old-fashioned charm, warm welcome and period furnishings are balanced with modern en-suite bathrooms, WIFI and flat screen TVs. It's easy to reach Belfast and Derry-Londonderry from Ardtara, or get out to the Giant's Causeway and beautiful North Antrim Coast.

http://ardtara.com

Decadent Dining

Britain is home to luxury dining experiences of all shapes and sizes - from the utmost in exclusivity, like celebrity haunt Chiltern Firehouse, to relaxed Michelin-starred gastropubs like The Treby Arms in Devon. Take the luxury up a level by staying at a sumptuous hotel with Michelin-starred menus - choose from an exclusive island like Eriska in Scotland, or the famous Welsh welcome at Ynyshir Hall in mid Wales.

LONDON

Advance booking is recommended for the London restaurants listed.

1. Berners Tavern, West End

For sheer spectacle, there are few dining rooms to beat Jason Atherton's space in the heart of the West End. Reserve a circular booth in the centre of the room to give the best view of the dozens of paintings and artworks that cover the walls and feast on regional British treats such as Cornish cod or Kentish lamb. A seat at the bar is one of the

Scallops at fashionable Berners Tavern in London's West End
hottest cocktail tickets in town; try a Thyme Traveller, with tequila and apple liqueur. Dress Code: Smart Casual

www.bernerstavern.com (nearest tube Tottenham Ct Road or Oxford Circus)

2. The Shard, London Bridge

London’s landmark new building – soaring to 310 metres – offers some of the most spectacular views and sleekest bars and restaurants in the capital. Whisk up to the 52nd floor for drinks at Gong, an elegant Asian-themed bar with a decadent, boudoir feel, before heading down Hutong, on the 33rd floor, for sophisticated Chinese cuisine. Or head to Aqua Shard, on the 32nd floor, with a dramatic, three-storey atrium bar and modern British cuisine on the menu. Dress Code (for all): Smart Casual

www.the-shard.com (nearest tube London Bridge)

3. Gymkhana, Mayfair

Winner of a Michelin star in the first year of opening, Gymkhana is has received praise from all quarters – critics and customers alike – who have been won over by its flair and finesse in Indian cuisine. The interior is stylish, kitted out like a Raj-era gymkhana club, ingredients are seasonal and British, and the atmosphere is intimate and romantic. Start your visit at the bar, where cocktails on the menu infuse rose water, spices and exotic fruits.

www.gymkhanalondon.com (nearest tube: Green Park)

4. Rules, Covent Garden

London's oldest restaurant, dating back to 1798, has a wonderfully grand feel with red leather banquettes, white linen tablecloths and a menu that specialises in British classics, including 28-day aged beef and classic English puddings. What fewer people know is that above the restaurant is one of London’s classiest cocktail bars; Upstairs at Rules, an elegantly old-fashioned room where Edward VII used to dine with his mistress, Lillie Langtry.

www.rules.co.uk (nearest tube Covent Garden or Charing Cross)

5. Chiltern Firehouse

If you want to eat at the Chiltern Firehouse, currently the capital's hippest eaterie, it's a good idea to book several months in advance. Celebrities, politicians and the London glitterati have all flocked to the former fire station, welcomed by the top-hatted doorman and guided through a pretty courtyard into the dining room. Chef Nuno Mendes creates American-themed dishes, including crab-stuffed doughnuts and chargrilled iberico pork; come before 6pm to grab a seat at the bar and people-watch.

www.chilternfirehouse.com (nearest tube Bond Street or Baker Street)
ENGLAND

1. Le Manoir aux Quat’ Saisons, Oxfordshire

Raymond Blanc’s beautiful country manor house was awarded two Michelin stars in 1985 and has held them ever since. One of the most expensive restaurants in Britain, dinner at Le Manoir is an event, with each dish created to look as beautiful as it tastes. Choose from a seasonal tasting menu or a la carte dishes including braised Turbot with scallop and wasabi or Cornish sea bass with Scottish langoustine. Haddenham & Thame station is fifteen minutes by taxi and 45 minutes from London Paddington. Advance reservations essential. Dress code: Smart Casual.

www.belmond.com/le-manoir-aux-quat-saisons-oxfordshire

2. Mr Underhills, Ludlow, Shropshire

The beautiful medieval town of Ludlow (around three hours by train from London Paddington, changing at Newport) has become a rural capital of gastronomy in recent years, and the Michelin-starred Mr Underhills restaurant with rooms offers the best meat, vegetables and cheese from local producers. The nine-course ‘Market Menu’ changes daily, but although the emphasis is on fresh, natural flavours rather than clever chemistry, the cooking is highly skilled. Reservations are essential, and for weekends need to be made well in advance. Dress Code: Smart Casual.

www.mr-underhills.co.uk

3. The Treby Arms, Devon

Winner of a Michelin star for 2015, The Treby Arms is a pearl in beautiful Devon that offers fine pub dining in a rustic and cosy countryside atmosphere. The chef is Anton Piotrowski, a MasterChef winner, who transformed a humble village pub into a must-stop for food lovers. In the summertime there’s nowhere better to be than the outdoor tables, beer in hand, 6 course taster menu about to commence!

www.thetrebyarms.co.uk

4. The Peacock at Rowsley, Rowsley, Derbyshire

Roaring log fires and low-beamed rooms give a wonderfully cosy feel to the dining rooms in this 17th century house, part of Lord Manners’ country estate. The impeccable service adds to the feel of old-school luxury, with dishes such as Pan-fried Derbyshire beef with smoked mash and Marinated Duck liver with shitake mushrooms offering the best of Modern British cuisine. Rowsley is a delightfully tranquil Peak District village, around three hours’ drive north of London. www.thepeacockatrowsley.com

5. Nathan Outlaw, Rock, Cornwall

On the stunning Cornish coastline in the quiet village of Rock (around five hours’ drive south-west of London), Chef Nathan Outlaw is a man who knows what to do with shellfish – and where better to eat it than by the Cornish seaside?
Outlaw does beautiful things with locally-caught fish and seafood. Restaurant Nathan Outlaw serves only an exquisite seafood tasting menu (which has won two Michelin stars), and - with advance notice - will also create a vegetarian tasting menu. For a wider choice of Nathan's dishes, book a table at Outlaw’s, his second - and less formal restaurant - both at the St Enodoc Hotel. Advance booking essential, no children under 12. Also in Cornwall is Outlaw’s Fish Kitchen, which won a Michelin star for 2015.


SCOTLAND
1. The Witchery by the Castle, Edinburgh

Arguably the most unique dining room in Scotland, the Witchery is a cluster of beautifully restored buildings that date back to the 16th century, right at the top of the Royal Mile. Dine on seafood platters and Scottish beef, surrounding by ornate wood panelling, leather studded banquettes and flickering candles. There are also nine opulent suites which ooze glamour - perfect for retiring to after a wonderfully indulgent dinner. No under-eights after 8pm.

www.thewitchery.com

2. The Dining Room at Boath House, Nairn

A beautifully-restored Georgian mansion just outside the coastal town of Nairn (around four hours drive north of Glasgow), the Boath House is a small hotel as well as a renowned restaurant. It's a wonderful spot for lunch, with 22 acres of manicured gardens to stroll in, and in the evening flickering candlelight gives a romantic air to proceedings. Diners choose from a three or six-course set menu, which changes daily according to whatever local producers have on offer. Dress Code: Smart Casual.

www.boath-house.com

3. 21212 Restaurant with Rooms, Edinburgh

Chef Paul Kitching’s Michelin-starred eaterie is set over four floors in a restored Georgian townhouse, with the main restaurant designed with an open kitchen, so diners can watch the chefs at work. The weekly-changing menu has its roots in French cuisine, with dishes such as Trout Almondine and Seafood a la Greque, and after a sumptuous meal, diners can retire to the glamorous silver and grey drawing rooms, for coffee and liqueurs with beautiful views across the Royal Terrace to the Firth of Firth.

www.21212restaurant.co.uk

4. Eriska, Isle of Eriska, West Argyll

Cross over the Hotel Eriska’s own private bridge to access this magical place - your very own island, where Highland cattle graze and grey seals bob about in the surrounding

www.21212restaurant.co.uk
waters. This piece of heaven on earth is a hotel and restaurant, which was recently awarded a Michelin star – making the idyll complete! Leave room after dinner for the Farmhouse Cheese Trolley. There’s also a nine hole golf course on site.

www.eriska-hotel.co.uk

5. The Three Chimneys and The House Over By, Isle of Skye

Recent winner of a Michelin star, The Three Chimneys offers the best in Scottish produce at its restaurant, and even better, there’s 5-star accommodation on site so you can feast then rest, then do it all again the next day. The Isle of Skye is a remote and special place, and the ‘Taste of Skye’ menu showcases its produce – think oysters, scallops and crab – to perfection. Virtually all ingredients used in the restaurant are sourced within a few miles.

www.threechimneys.co.uk

WALES

1. Tyddyn Llan, Llandrillo, Denbighshire

The former shooting lodge of the Duke of Westminster, Tyddyn Llan is now one of Wales’ top restaurants, offering daily-changing a la carte menus, and two tasting menus. Vegetarians are particularly well-catered for and fresh fish, caught on the nearby Welsh coast, is a strong feature. There are a dozen bedrooms, making it perfect for a short break, with the dramatic mountains of Snowdonia National Park a short drive away. Llandrillo is around 3.5 hours’ drive north-west of London. Dress code: Smart casual.

www.tyddynllan.co.uk

2. The Walnut Tree Inn, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire

It may call itself an Inn, but once inside the Walnut Tree manages to combine the elegance of a formal restaurant with the laid-back charm of a traditional British pub. The eclectic menu combines Asian flavours with Modern British dishes, with Thai crab cakes appearing alongside roasted loin of rabbit. Chef-owner Shaun Hill has held Michelin-stars since the 1980s and is one of Britain’s best regarded chefs. Abergavenny is around three hours’ drive west of London. Reservations essential.

www.walnuttreeinn.com

3. Park House, Cardiff

A 19th century Gothic mansion originally built for the Marquess of Bute, an evening at Park House begins with classic cocktails in the Vanilla Rooms, one of Cardiff’s most elegant bars, before dinner in Burges restaurant, where the Modern British cuisine encompasses everything from succulent Welsh lamb to lobster and crab ravioli. Park House is known for its impressive wine list, with 350 bins on offer, and a whisky menu with over 50 to choose from. Cardiff is 2hrs 40 minutes by train from London Paddington.

(www.parkhouserestaurant.co.uk)
4. The Crown at Whitebrook, Whitebrook, Monmouthshire

Don’t be fooled by the plain exterior of the Crown: once through the door an elegant, pared-down interior creates a refined space for discovering the tastes of rural Wales. The Michelin-starred menu makes the most of foraged ingredients, including wild herbs and garlic while the wine list includes vintages from local Welsh and English vineyards. Food is hearty – suckling pig or Longhorn beef – with good vegetarian options. Whitebrook is around three hours drive west of London.

www.thecrownatwhitebrook.co.uk

5. Ynyshir Hall, Eglwysfach, Powys

Come for the Michelin-starred food, stay for the utter peace and tranquillity which surrounds Ynyshir Hall, tucked away in the Cambrian mountains in mid-Wales. The hotel’s restaurant is one of the most elegant fine dining rooms in Wales, and chef Gareth Ward uses only local produce to create light but innovative tasting menus. Salmon and sewin come from nearby rivers, lobster crab and shrimp from the Welsh coast, which is just a few miles away. Ynyshir is around 4.5 hours drive north-west of London.

www.ynyshirhall.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. OX Belfast, Belfast

Inventive, but unfussly, dining at Ox is guaranteed to be good, which means you can sit back and relax while you’re there. That, and the welcoming and friendly service that immediately puts you at your ease. Chef Stephen (from Belfast) and Sommelier Alain (from Brittany) have combined their experience at Michelin-starred restaurants around the world to create an enticing menu utilising superb local ingredients.

www.oxbelfast.com

2. James Street South, Belfast

The 5 course seasonal tasting menu is a foodie experience you won’t forget, and the atmosphere is hip and buzzy, making you feel like you’re in the place to be. If scallops are on the menu, try them, and the Strangford Lough Bouillabaise is particularly delicious.

www.jamesstreetsouth.co.uk

3. EIPIC, Belfast

With a floor to ceiling walk in wine cellar, this is a relatively new restaurant to the Belfast gastronomy scene that changes its menu weekly, basing it around seasonal produce and the chef Danni Barry’s relationship with local suppliers. Ideal for adventurous diners, EIPIC is the latest in the portfolio of restaurants by the renowned Michael Deane, a stalwart of the Northern Ireland dining scene.

www.michaeldeane.co.uk
4. Browns Champagne, Derry-Londonderry

If it’s celebration you’re in town for, start your night at Browns Champagne Lounge in Derry-Londonderry, a city that’s transformed over the past few years into a cultural hub. The restaurant serves up the best in quality and it’s well worth trying the taster menu.

www.browns-restaurants.co.uk

5. Saphyre Restaurant, Belfast

Glamour and opulence reign at Saphyre, which is decadently decorated (think velvet chairs and sumptuous wallpaper) and ideal for a special occasion. Food is splendidly presented – and will tempt your smartphone out of your pocket for instant instagramming – and tastes as good as it looks. Vegetarians are well catered for with imaginative dishes, and afternoon tea fans won’t be disappointed: Saphyre’s scones are the real thing, and you can even enjoy English sparkling wine instead of tea!

www.saphyrerestaurant.com

Luxury Shopping Directory

VisitBritain has compiled a directory of luxury shopping highlighting Britain's variety, quality and innovation.

Royal Warrants - take home luxury fit for a King or Queen

What is a Royal Warrant?

Royal Warrants have been issued for centuries to companies or suppliers that provide goods or services to the Royal Family. The Warrant – which can be displayed in the form of a crest, or coat of arms, enables the company to advertise the fact that it supplies to the issuer of the Royal Warrant.

Who can issue a Royal Warrant?

Warrants are currently issued by the three most senior members of the Royal Family: The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and The Prince of Wales. To qualify for a Royal Warrant, companies need to have supplied goods or services to the Royal Family for at least five years. Twining Teas has had a Royal Warrant for over 150 years!

Who holds a Royal Warrant?

Around 850 companies hold a Royal Warrant. These range from clothing companies to mustard makers, right through to mobile phone companies. They are spread throughout Britain, as well as a few companies overseas.

If you want to buy a gift for a loved one, or - let’s face it - for yourself, follow the royal crests above the doors of shops to seek out high quality products loved by royalty.

Find out more about Royal Warrant Holders at www.royalwarrant.org
10 Luxury Royal Warrant Holders and what to buy from them

Go for EVERYTHING EDIBLE: Fortnum & Mason

This very grand grocery store in Piccadilly has been supplying the Royal Family with products for over 300 years. In fact, it was set up by two of George III’s footmen. It’s famous for its hampers and luxurious afternoon teas, but was also the first place in Britain to sell baked beans! There’s now a branch at St Pancras International as well - the first to open for 307 years. [www.fortnumandmason.com](http://www.fortnumandmason.com)

Go for WELLINGTON BOOTS: Hunter Boots

Started in 1856 by an American entrepreneur Henry Lee Norris, Hunter boots were developed to help British soldiers deal with the trenches in World War I. Now a staple piece of equipment for the summer festival circuit, it’s still the Royal Family’s Wellington boot of choice and now comes in every colour – although traditionalists prefer the original Hunter Green. Buy them at Harrods, Selfridges and Office stores around Britain [www.hunter-boot.com](http://www.hunter-boot.com)

Go for LUXE CHRISTMAS CRACKERS: Tom Smith

A British Christmas wouldn’t be the same without some crackers to pull during the meal. Cardboard tubes covered in colourful paper that produce a (very small!) explosion when they’re pulled and containing paper hats, jokes and small gifts, The Queen gets hers from Tom Smith, based in the Welsh county of Glamorgan, just as her parents and grandparents did before her. At Christmas-time, you’ll find crackers on sale everywhere, from the poshest shops to supermarkets. [www.tomsmithcrackers.co.uk](http://www.tomsmithcrackers.co.uk)

Go for HANDBAGS: Launer

The Queen is never without a handbag and they nearly always come from Launer; she has more than 40 Launer bags to choose from in her wardrobe. Still made entirely by hand in Walsall, a small town near the Midlands city of Birmingham, all the handbags are lined in suede with gold-plated fastenings. Luxurious but never flashy, you’ll also find wallets and iPhone cases in its collection of leather goods, stocked by shops such as Fortnum & Mason. [www.launer.com](http://www.launer.com)

Go for OUTERWEAR: J Barbour

A triple warrant holder, this company sells its distinctive waterproof waxed jackets to the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles. It’s also the favoured brand of many a well-heeled hot model or actress for their ‘downtime’ in the countryside. Started and still made in South Shields, in the north east of England, where there’s a factory shop selling at discounted prices, Barbour clothing covers both catwalk and countryside wear, famed for its practicality and - increasingly - style. British fashion designer Alice Temperley has curated a recent collection. [www.barbour.com](http://www.barbour.com)

Choose a handbag like the Queen’s at Launer.
Go for SOCKS: Corgi

Feet need socks, and the Prince of Wales granted Corgi a Royal Warrant back in 1989 for their delightful luxury ones. Made in Wales since 1892, the company is still family run, designer Lisa Wood’s creations have appeared under many haute couture labels, and sell in the finest stores all over the world. You can get men and women’s lightweight and heavyweight cotton socks from £11 a pair, and cashmere from £49. The Factory Shop has big reductions: it’s in Carmarthenshire, an hour’s drive north east of Cardiff.

www.corgihosiery.co.uk

Go for KITCHEN LINENS: Ulster Weavers

Every Ulster Weavers product is designed in Northern Ireland, where the company has made high quality linen since 1880 - and has held Royal Warrants for the last 800 years. Queen Elizabeth II first bestowed hers on the company in 1995, and it’s been keeping her kitchen stocked for almost 20 years now. The range of homewares and gift items is irresistible, with beautiful and modern designs alongside the traditional and more classic prints. It’s not just about the look, but the feel though - quality is second to none.

www.ulsterweavers.com

Go for CHEESE: Valvona & Crolla

Scotland's oldest delicatessen and Italian wine merchant, Valvona & Crolla is one of Europe's original and best specialist food shops, founded in 1934. An independent family business, the original premises are still in use and well worth a visit when in Edinburgh for its fantastic array of cheese from Scotland. www.valvonacrolla.co.uk

Go for PERFUME: Floris

Step inside the fragrant world of Floris, on Jermyn Street (just behind Fortnum and Mason). The only perfumer to The Queen to hold a Royal Warrant is, as you'd imagine, discreetly glamorous. Choose from classic scents to more exotic perfumes, sample ‘Royal Arms’ - created to celebrate The Queen's birth in 1926, and Ian Fleming's bespoke brew - the 'no 89'. You can splash out on your own bespoke fragrance too - after a 90 minute consultation with a Floris perfumer in the beautiful store, emerge with a 100ml customised Eau de Parfum, details of which will be kept on file for you to re-order.

www.florislondon.com

Go for TAILORING: Gieves and Hawkes

Savile Row tailor Gieves and Hawkes may have been founded in 1771, but it has not ceased to move with the times and appeal to the modern gentleman. Not just for men though - the company designed The Queen’s ‘boat cloak’, worn in 1953 and famously photographed by Cecil Beaton. It holds a Royal Warrant from all three Royal ‘buyers’ who can bestow one. They have a ready to wear collection, and also make luxury weekendwear, but for the ultimate in style and finesse, go for the tailoring service in the Savile Row store and get a made to measure suit or bespoke coat. www.gievesandhawkes.com
Personalised services
Buy bespoke luxury

There is nothing more luxurious than a made-for-you one-off gift. Head to Carolina Bucci’s Knightsbridge store for a bespoke piece by the jewellery designer loved by Victoria Beckham, Nicole Kidman and Gwyneth Paltrow. Also in Knightsbridge is handbag designer Anya Hindmarch’s bespoke shop, where a craftsman works on a select array of leather goods, from book marks and made-to-measure wallets, to the Ultimate Box - a leather chest with drawers and compartments embossed with different labels and panels of inlaid satin printed with personal photographs.

www.carolinabucci.com
www.anyahindmarch.com/Bespoke

Hit the shops with a personal stylist

Britain has some of the best shopping in the world: from department stores Liberty, Harrods and Selfridges in London to chic boutiques in Leeds and Manchester, the choice can be overwhelming. Thread Styling offer bespoke packages where you can have a day of personal shopping with your own personal stylist to ensure you only buy what you really want and need, make-up consultations and a fashion concierge service so you can be kept up to date on the season’s must-haves.

www.threadsstyling.co.uk

15 luxury designers

Britain leads on the fabulous stage that is fashion, so make sure you take home the best British souvenirs from its most iconic and cutting edge designers.

J.W.Anderson

Northern Irish fashion designer J.W.Anderson is known for modern, androgynous clothing with a sense of fun. Following the success of his men’s collections he transitioned into womenswear, and is known for experimenting with cuts and fabrics traditionally associated with menswear. Anderson’s designs have become a style staple for trendsetters such as Alexa Chung and his collaborations with Topshop were a sell-out hit.
http://j-w-anderson.co.uk

Victoria Beckham

The style maven Victoria Beckham has carved out a career in fashion - perhaps to the surprise of many, for whom she was seen as a ‘Footballer’s Wife’ and former Spice Girl. She has become one of the most respected designers in the business: her designs are elegantly tailored and her eye for fashion throughout her career makes her well placed to understand exactly what women want to be seen in. Her success in the luxury designer market was cemented by the opening of the Victoria Beckham store on Mount Street in Mayfair, the home of fashion’s élite.

www.victoriabeckham.com
Burberry

Explorers in the early 1900s headed to Burberry's London headquarters to be kitted out for trips to the Arctic, and British aristocrats still come here for its trench coat - always lined with its distinctive check. Burberry is much more than outerwear - its clothes and beauty looks are coveted by the great and good of fashion, with the hottest new models and film stars appearing in its ad campaigns (not to mention Romeo Beckham - son of David and Victoria!). The Regent Street Burberry store is the biggest in the world, while its first standalone beauty store, The Beauty Box (in Covent Garden) has a Digital Runway Nail Bar and offers the chance to buy beauty looks straight off the catwalk. 

http://uk.burberry.com/store-locator/regent-street-store

Sarah Burton/Alexander McQueen

Sarah Burton faced an enormous project a year into her appointment as creative director at Alexander McQueen: The Duchess of Cambridge's wedding dress. The identity of the dress's designer was kept under wraps until the bride emerged, and as soon as she did, Burton became a household name and was included in Time's 2012 100 most influential people. Burton was born in north east England, in Cheshire, and like many hot designers studied at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design in London. An internship with McQueen followed, the late designer then relatively unknown, and she was appointed his successor following his sad death in 2010. Amal Alamuddin wore McQueen Resort as part of the celebrations of her wedding to Hollywood heartthrob George Clooney, and the Duchess of Cambridge wears both McQueen and Sarah Burton’s own label regularly.

www.alexandermcqueen.com

Harris Tweed

Harris Tweed is woven using traditional methods by the inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, at the topmost tip of the UK. The geographical status of Harris Tweed has been protected since 1909 - its logo can only be used for material spun, dyed and woven there. Harris Tweed has recently experienced a fashionable resurgence, collaborating with Chanel and Clarks.

www.harristweed.org

Lulu Guinness

A handbag designed to look like a bunch of flowers, a clutch bag in the shape of a giant pair of lips. Lulu Guinness's intensely feminine handbag designs are instantly recognisable, always witty and often reminiscent of the 1920s and 30s. Her bags are in the Victoria & Albert's museum permanent collection and she has a shop in Ellis Street in London SW1, but you'll also find her designs in department stores including Harrods and Selfridges.

www.luluguinness.com

Christopher Kane

Hailing from Scotland, and educated - like many top designers - at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, Christopher Kane is a major fashion influencer whose daring styles are regularly worn by Kylie on stage and the
most stylish names in fashion. Fiercely proud of his Scottish heritage, his line with prime cashmere company Johnstons of Elgin, was a roaring success and turned around the fortunes of the quality wool mill. Though you can buy his creations in department stores Liberty, Selfridges and Harvey Nichols, Kane’s very own store will open in Mayfair at the end of 2014 on Mount Street, promising a wild and creative shopping space to match his unique collections.

www.kering.com/en/brands/luxury/christopher-kane

Jenny Packham

Hot British export and favourite of the Duchess of Cambridge Jenny Packham is best known for her delicate feminine dresses and sophisticated bridalwear. Her gowns have graced red carpets around the world, worn by stars including Angelina Jolie, Kate Winslet and Keira Knightley. Her Ready-to-wear boutique is in Mayfair and her bridal boutique is in Chelsea, central London.
www.jennypackham.com

Jayne Pierson

Welsh designer Jayne Pierson is known for her innovative luxury womenswear. Pierson began her career as a singer-songwriter and now regularly designs and styles for musicians and actresses. Her directional designs, with their innovative use of materials such as pleated leather, have inspired something of a cult following – high profile fans include singers La Roux and Jessie J.
www.jaynepierson.co.uk

Julien MacDonald

Proving that it’s handy to learn to knit from a young age, Julien MacDonald’s mother taught him the skill, and a few years later he was creating knitwear for Alexander McQueen, as well as working at Chanel under Karl Lagerfeld. The Welsh designer’s own designs are intensely feminine and, above all, fun - worn by celebrities including showgirl singers Beyoncé and Kylie, and elegant actresses Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Beckinsale. The designer’s own label is manufactured in Britain, and his Bespoke line is dedicated to creating one-off styles, which are all hand made in Britain. http://julienmacdonald.com

Stella McCartney

Stella may be the daughter of Beatle Paul McCartney but she’s always been determined to be successful in her own right. A graduate of the famous Central St Martins fashion college in London, she became head designer for Chloe when she was 26, later returning to London to set up her own label; her main store is in Bruton Street in Mayfair. A committed vegetarian, none of Stella’s creations use leather or fur.

www.stellamccartney.com/gb

Charlotte Olympia

Beautiful and flirty, Charlotte Olympia’s shoes are a guaranteed talking point. Worn by celebrities from Beyoncé to Anne Hathaway, the designer’s quirky designs are often laugh-out-loud funny. The Mayfair store is a must-visit unless you really don’t want to shop: just ‘window shopping’ here is impossible. The ‘Runaway Bride’ range is well-suited to women
planning a non-traditional wedding look, with plenty of leopard print, ‘something blue’ puffballs and kitty faces. Men aren’t left out of the fashion game, with gorgeous velvet slippers embroidered with Charlotte’s signature web icon.

[Website Link]

**Paul Smith**

Classic tailoring with colourful, quirky touches, Paul Smith helped revolutionise British menswear when he opened his first shop in Nottingham more than 40 years ago. He brought boxer shorts back to popularity and led a generation to clutch a Filofax organiser. Now you can find his trademark multicoloured swirl on womenswear as well as enormously popular accessories. He’s got shops around the world but his flagship is in London’s Notting Hill and he’s never forgotten his Nottinghamshire roots in England’s east Midlands region; you’ll find shops there, as well as in Leeds, Yorkshire, north England.

[Website Link]

**Pringle of Scotland**

Royal Warrant-holding Pringle of Scotland was founded in 1815 in Hawick, the Borders birthplace of Scotland’s knitwear industry. Pringle is credited with the invention of the signature argyle pattern, as well as the classic ‘twinset’, as worn by Princess Grace. Tilda Swinton has modelled for the brand and the company recently collaborated with internationally renowned fashion college Central Saint Martins.

[Website Link]

**Vivienne Westwood**

In 1971, Vivienne Westwood opened a shop at 430 Kings Road in London, called Let It Rock. This was the shop that invented punk fashion. Since then, Westwood has moved on to create highly romantic clothes, often using Scottish tartans and tweeds, using tailoring techniques that were first used in the 17th and 18th century. Always outspoken, utterly distinctive, she still has her original shop – now called Worlds End. Her designs are distinctive and speak volumes about a woman with style and flair - if that's you, head to her store and start swooning over the excellent craftsmanship and out-of-this-world structured tailoring.

[Website Link]

**Jewellery**

When it comes to a special memento to remember your visit, Britain has plenty of hot designers and jewellery quarters to explore.

**Astley Clarke**

Astley Clarke’s innovative designs have inspired a new generation of luxury customers, challenging perceptions of fine jewellery with beautiful gemstones, unusual textures and coloured precious metals. The young company has a West London boutique and was recently named best online luxury brand by Walpole. Astley Clarke has won high profile
fans such as Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Anniston and Pippa Middleton.  

**Birmingham Jewellery Quarter**

Steeped in rich history, the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter is the Midland city's 'Golden Mile', home to over 500 businesses. The designated conservation area is more than 250 years old; with 200 listed buildings it has a unique historical look and feel. Industry continues to flourish and the vibrant area is also home to the largest School of Jewellery in Europe.

www.jewelleryquarter.net

**Jane Gowans**

Dundee-based contemporary jewellery designer Jane Gowans transforms everyday inspirations – such as the local Scottish landscape – into contemporary, wearable designs. Each piece of jewellery is handmade in Britain, hallmarked and finished in Scotland. Jane Gowans is stocked in department store Harvey Nichols, Edinburgh (see page 7). Emeli Sandé is a fan and Gowans was recently nominated for a Scottish Fashion Award.

www.janegowans.co.uk

**Graff Diamonds**

London jeweller Graff Diamonds specialises in exceptional rare gemstones, with its expert craftsmen involved with every step of jewellery making from sourcing to setting. Earlier this year Graff unveiled the Peacock brooch, a dazzling collection of over 120 carats of coloured diamonds; valued at $100 million, it is one of the most expensive pieces of jewellery made in recent history.

www.graffdiamonds.com

**Hatton Garden**

The Hatton Garden jewellery quarter, in the heart of the Old City of London, has been the centre of London’s jewellery trade since medieval times. Today, the area contains a concentrated cluster of over 300 businesses showcasing the work of over 1000 of Britain’s finest jewellers and craftsmen, and a variety of styles from antique pieces to futurist designs.

www.hatton-garden.net

**Accessories**

**Asprey**

Asprey has set the standard of British luxury since 1781, specialising in leather goods, jewellery, silverware and accessories. Originally based in Surrey, South England, it moved to New Bond Street, London in 1847. The company has a longstanding relationship with the British royal family, dating back to the 1800s when Queen Victoria awarded the company its first Royal Warrant.

www.asprey.com
William Chambers

Glasgow-based milliner William Chambers was recently named Accessory Designer of the Year at the Scottish Fashion Awards. Chambers has modernised millinery, combining diverse inspirations (floristry, British birds and architecture) with contemporary materials such as metallic leather and latex. His designs have graced the heads of celebrities Anna Dello Russo and Livia Firth and are a firm fixture at Royal Ascot.  
www.williamchambers.co.uk

Anya Hindmarch

Luxury handbag label Anya Hindmarch is synonymous with British creativity and humour. Her now iconic I Am Not A Plastic Bag tote caused a fashion frenzy, with 80,000 people queuing across the UK. Anya Hindmarch has a loyal celebrity following including Alexa Chung, Cara Delevingne and the Duchess of Cambridge. The West London flagship features a popular bespoke service.  
www.anyahindmarch.com

Nicholas Kirkwood

Footwear designer Nicholas Kirkwood found fame for his witty, architectural and beautifully crafted creations. The award-winning designer has collaborated on statement designs for fashion stars including Erdem and Preen. Kirkwood’s assistant and protégé Sophia Webster is a rising star known for her creative, humorous designs. 
www.nicholaskirkwood.com , www.sophiawebster.co.uk

Mr Hare

London shoe designer Mr Hare specialises in dapper designs fit for a modern day dandy. The emphasis is on high quality footwear - each pair is handmade in Tuscany, Italy, and manufactured in limited numbers. Mr Hare isn’t afraid to have fun with fashion - his rakish designs embody the spirit of the brand, but the craftsmanship and chic details are timeless.  
www.mrhare.com

Mulberry

Mulberry shot to fame for hit bag designs such as the ‘Alexa’, and is a favourite of the Duchess of Cambridge, who carries the Polly Push Lock Tote. Mulberry is based in Somerset, South West England, where the bags are still made and there is a factory store outlet.  
www.mulberry.com

The Cambridge Satchel Company

The Cambridge Satchel Company shot to fame for its handmade bags and recently opened its first boutiques in Covent Garden, central
London, and Cambridge, an hour's train ride from London.

www.cambridgesatchel.com

**Gifts**

**Caithness Glass**

Scotland is renowned for the art of glassmaking. Caithness Glass is one of the best-known brands, with quality paperweights and art glass highly sought after by collectors around the world. Each piece is hand-crafted in Crieff, central Scotland, using traditional techniques and designs take inspiration from the colours of the Scottish landscape - purple heather, blue lochs and earthy tones.

www.caithnessglass.co.uk

**Penhaligon’s**

Luxury perfumer Penhaligon’s heritage dates back to the Victorian era, when the company opened its first boutique in London’s West End. Penhaligon’s has a historical relationship with the British monarchy – William Penhaligon was Perfumer to the Royal Court, and the company holds two Royal Warrants. The signature fragrance bottle is Penhaligon’s original design: a clear glass with ribbon-wrapped stopper.

www.penhaligons.com

**Smythson**

Smythson has a rich history as purveyor of handmade leather goods, recently celebrating its 125th anniversary. Frank Smythson invented the signature soft-bound leather ‘Panama’ diary in 1908, which was an immediate success, notably carried by Grace Kelly. Smythson holds three Royal Warrants and fans include Madonna and Dame Helen Mirren. Samantha Cameron is former creative director and now advisor.

www.smythson.com

**Shopping Destinations**

**Browns – South Molton Street/Davies Street**

Once a small boutique on a ground floor space on South Molton Street (behind London’s Bond Street), Browns has expanded to fill five inter-connecting townhouses with fashion, glorious fashion. Carefully selected designer clothing and accessories will puts Browns shoppers at the vanguard of style. There’s a shop especially for Brides, one for men and one for fine jewellery. Browns Focus puts a spotlight on emerging fashion talent, and there’s also a dedicated Vera Wang at Browns shop devoted to the designer famed for her bridalwear.

www.brownsfashion.com/info/stores

**Burlington Arcade**

The Burlington Arcade, situated between Bond Street and Piccadilly in central London, is one of the UK’s most stunning shopping arcades. It opened in 1819 ‘for the sale of jewellery...
and fancy articles of fashionable demand' and was popular among royalty. Linley and Brintons recently transformed Burlington Arcade's iconic carpet with a design featuring iconic buildings from around the world.  
www.burlington-arcade.co.uk

**Dover Street Market**

Dover Street Market in Mayfair, central London is one of the city's edgiest shopping destinations. The brainchild of Comme des Garçons designer Rei Kawakubo combines high-end fashion (including exclusive pieces by designers such as Hussein Chalayan) with an ever-evolving marketplace feel. The shop is credited with helping to launch the careers of up-and-coming designers such as Simone Rocha.  
www.doverstreetmarket.com

**London Luxury Quarter**

The London Luxury Quarter comprises the historic neighbourhoods of Mayfair, St James's and Piccadilly, where many of the capital’s most exquisite craftspeople and designers are based. Home to over two thirds of the top 100 celebrated luxury brands, the area hosts eighteen luxury five star hotels, and 23 Michelin star restaurants with 31 stars awarded between them.  
www.londonluxuryquarter.com

**Lisburn Road**

Lisburn Road is known as Belfast’s ‘Style Mile’. Located in the heart of the Northern Irish capital it has a heritage dating back to 1817. The eclectic mix of upmarket fashion boutiques, established jewellers, interiors, arts and antiques shops means there’s something for everyone - which along with Lisburn Road’s reputation for fine dining, has put it firmly on the map.  
www.thelisburnroad.com

**Newcastle Gateshead**

Newcastle, in the North West of England, is fast becoming one of the UK’s biggest and most diverse fashion destinations. Exclusive high-end shopping location Monument Mall is currently being redeveloped in the heart of the city centre, and the famous Fenwick department store and the exclusive independent shopping district in historic Grainger Town can be found nearby.  
www.NewcastleGateshead.com

**The Hayes**

The Hayes is Cardiff’s most scenic shopping destination, located in the historic heart of the South Wales capital. The bustling pedestrianised thoroughfare links old and new, with grand Victorian and Edwardian arcades on one side, and fashionable St David’s on the other. The Hayes is home to numerous designers, as well as Cardiff’s oldest department store, Howell’s, dating from 1865.  
www.visitcardiff.com/shopping/the-hayes

**The Victoria Quarter**

The Victoria Quarter in the northern English city of Leeds brings together a diverse mix of shops and boutiques in stunning architectural surroundings. The area has a rich history and was once the location of butchers, fruit and vegetable stalls and Leeds’ Bazaar where
Westfield

Westfield is synonymous with a fantastic shopping experience. Known to have all the fashionable shops you’d need in one place - from clothes, to homewares to gadgets - its Stafford City branch is Europe’s largest shopping destination. There is another London Westfield, in Shepherd’s Bush, as well as one in Derby (in the East Midlands region of England) and Merry Hill, half an hour from Birmingham. http://uk.westfield.com

Special spas

Drift off in a state of bliss at a luxury spa in the beautiful countryside, or take some time out from urban exploration with a spa in the city. Britain's spas are carefully crafted to optimise relaxation and minimise effort.

Lucknam Park Hotel and Spa, Bath, South West England

While the staff remain discreet about their celebrity clientele, it’s hard for Lucknam Hotel not to boast about its spa with indoor hydrotherapy pool, saltwater plunge pool, thermal cabins and nine high-tech treatment rooms offering a selection of treatments from Carita Paris and Anne Semonin (their signature de-stress Botanical Oil and Herbal Back Therapy is a must-try). To top it off, the recently added Wellbeing House specialises in alternative therapies, from Haslauer Sunlight Therapy sessions, yoga and dry flotation to sleep and nutrition clinics.

www.lucknampark.co.uk

Ruthin Castle Moat Spa, North Wales

What's unusual about the spa at Ruthin Castle is its location resting in the rustic woodland grounds of the ancient castle's moat. Bringing together nature and luxury in a unique set-up, as well as ESPA facials, scrubs and wraps, there are plenty of hidden surprises too, including a sauna tent and a cocoon seat hanging from the trees outside. Their signature treatment, the Sunset Sparkle Gold Body Scrub, is a regenerating, luxurious body wrap featuring a blend of cane sugar, caviar, golden jojoba oil and grape seed oil.

www.ruthincastle.co.uk

Bulgari Spa, London

While the Bulgari underground spa may look dark and moody it is, of course, extremely stylish. A glass and onyx haven in the middle of bustling central London, the spa is set over two floors and comprises 11 treatment rooms, a thermal room, ice fountain and a 25m pool (the largest in London). The spa suite can be hired for complete privacy in which to indulge in treatments such as the gold naturalift anti-aging treatment, which combines the power of acupuncture with the luxurious beautifying properties of 24 Carat gold for a natural alternative to Botox. www.bulgarihotels.com

It's impossible not to unwind at Lucknam Park Hotel's magnificent spa

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Dorchester Hotel Spa, London

Combining old-world glamour with cutting-edge treatments, the nine sound-proofed rooms at The Dorchester Spa offer Vaishaly's famous facials (loved by the likes of Elle Macpherson, Nigella Lawson and Sophie Dahl), and acclaimed products from Carol Joy London, who uses some of the world's most precious beauty ingredients such as authentic diamond dust and golden millet oil. Dressing rooms exude elegance, thanks to experience showers, state-of-the-art aromatic steam rooms lined with white glass mosaics, mood lighting, and lockers finished in hand-produced shell lacquer.

www.dorchestercollection.com

The Scarlet Spa, Cornwall, South West England

A 'grown-ups only' hotel with a state-of-the-art eco-spa, the highlight of The Scarlet is the cliff-top outdoor pool and hot tubs with panoramic views across the sea. The focus is on holistic wellbeing and every treatment begins with a consultation with a Tri-Dosha qualified practitioner, including an ayurvedic diagnosis to determine body type. Try ‘The Journey': a three hour super-treatment, including a bathing ritual, body scrub and massage, then relax in the serene tented treatment zone or meditation room.

www.scarlethotel.co.uk

Vineyard Spa, Berkshire, South East England

Wine is very much the focus at the 5-star Vineyard Hotel which combines five-star dining, an impressive wine collection and luxury accommodation in a countryside setting. It comes as no surprise that the spa follows the hotel’s lead, offering a number of signature services incorporating own brand grape-based products, such as a Red Grape Pampering Body Wrap. As well as pool, jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, there’s an impressive treatment list exclusively using Darphin products, numerous grooming services, and an extensive list of treatments for men.

www.the-vineyard.co.uk

Gleneagles, Perthshire, Scotland

The ultimate countryside retreat, Gleneagles spa is as famous as its world-class golfing greens. As well as the impressive 20 treatment rooms, there are crystal steam rooms, tropical showers, chilling ice rubs, saunas and a vitality pool. Their signature treatment, The Source, takes ingredients from the fresh waters and rolling hills of Perthshire and involves two hours of complete bliss, including a footbath, exfoliation, full body and head massage.

www.gleneagles.com

Sheraton Grand Hotel and Spa, Edinburgh

The Sheraton's rooftop hydro-therapy pool, which is accessed by swimming from an indoor pool, is the perfect spot to luxuriate in 35C bubbling mineral water which evaporates into
mist in the air above as you gaze out over Edinburgh. Inside, the contemporary city spa has 11 treatment rooms, a fitness studio with state-of-the-art Technogym equipment and Thermal Suite with holistic heat experiences including an aroma grotto, rock sauna, bio sauna, tepidarium, laconium and hammam.

www.sheratonedinburgh.co.uk/one-spa

Galgorm Resort and Spa, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

A thermal spa, infinity hydrotherapy pool and outdoor hot tubs – all the water-based relaxation you could ask for in absolutely stunning surroundings. You can also spa ‘Roman style’ with ice fountains, a herb caldarium and Laconium, guaranteed to leave you in a state of imperial majesty. There are dedicated treatments for couples - The Paris Suite lets you enjoy your own bathtub side by side with your partner - while The Boudoir is dedicated to women who want to unwind in the company of friends and enjoy a spot of gossip and glamour.

www.spa-galgorm.com

St Brides Hotel, Saundersfoot, Wales

The sea plays a central role at Pembrokeshire's only spa hotel. Gazing out from its outdoor infinity pool onto the sandy beaches of the charming seaside resort, Saundersfoot, with a press of a button you can turn the water into a bubbling hot tub. Marine products - clay, mud and seaweed are used in treatments and the soothing thermal suite with aroma steam room scented with lemongrass, rock sauna, jungle and mountain mist-themed showers complete the relaxation.

www.stbridesspahotel.com
10 luxury driving experiences

If you want to get out and discover the real Britain, there’s no better way to do it than on four wheels. Leave the motorways behind and you find a whole different country, where quiet lanes link picturesque villages and thatched-roof pubs, and life goes at a much slower pace. There are wonderful coastal drives too; where the road clings to the cliffs while the sea crashes below, and adventures to be had around the beautiful lakes and mountains in the north of the country.

Britain has a wonderful motoring history; home of Rolls Royce and Jaguar and, of course, James Bond’s beloved Aston Martin. What better way to explore by road than in a classic sports car or luxury vehicle – and if you don’t fancy getting behind the wheel yourself, there are plenty of companies who offer chauffeur services, giving you the chance to glide through the countryside in a Rolls Royce or Porsche – the epitome of travelling in style.

1. James Bond’s Scotland

Fans of the latest Bond film, Skyfall, will know that the spectacular Scottish scenery makes a wonderful road trip - particularly if you happen to be driving an Aston Martin. Scotland specialist McKinlay Kidd offer a three-day trip in an Aston Martin DB9 that includes driving up the west coast of Scotland, past Loch Crinan - a location in From Russia with Love, and onto the Faslane Naval Base, which featured in The Spy Who Loved Me. After a night in a five-star hotel on a private island, which includes a lesson in how to make the perfect martini, the route heads to Glencoe - considered Scotland’s most beautiful glen and scene of the dramatic finale in Skyfall.

www.mckinlaykidd.co.uk

2. ...more Aston Martin experiences

Whether you've brought your own Aston Martin over to Britain, or would like to hire one, you can take on a Track event at iconic racetrack Silverstone, or do a performance driving course at Aston Martin HQ ready to become the next 007. There's also a 'Dine on the Line' experience at the factory in Gaydon, which includes a tour - explore the history of the beautiful machines - and a champagne lunch enjoyed while watching the cars move down the factory line.

www.astonmartin.com/events

3. Glorious Goodwood

The Goodwood Estate in Sussex, around one hour's drive south of London, is steeped in motoring history; the race track first opened in 1948 and now hosts the iconic Festival of Speed and the Goodwood Revival - a weekend dedicated to vintage cars. Book a Classic Car Weekend and you can stay at the elegant Goodwood Hotel and explore the surrounding countryside in a beautiful Rolls Royce, an E-Type Jaguar, or a characterful vintage car such as an Austin Healey. Goodwood is surrounded by the rolling hills of the South Downs National Park, and the elegant Roman town of Chichester is just a short drive away. www.goodwood.co.uk

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4. Northern Ireland by Supercar

If you’re looking for the last word in driving luxury, Super Cars on Demand can supply everything from convertible Ferraris to Jaguar F-Types and Audi Spiders – perfect for striking out into the unspoilt countryside of Northern Ireland. Plot a route that takes in iconic sites such as the Giant’s Causeway, the Mountains of Moine and the bustling city of Belfast – cars can be hired for any length of time from one day to a number of weeks. Supercars on Demand can arrange for cars to be collected at any Irish airport, or can deliver them to any hotel. The only stipulation is that drivers must be over thirty. www.supercarsondemand.com

5. Downton by Daimler

For those who want to explore by car, but would rather not be behind the wheel, there’s no more relaxing option than a private chauffeur. Wilson Chauffeur Services offer chauffeured guided tours to some of the most iconic houses and sites around the country, including Highclere Castle – better known as Downton Abbey, home of the Crawley family. The trip includes a visit to Highclere and to nearby Bampton village, also used as a location in the series. Alongside the luxury Daimler, the fleet also includes a Rolls Royce Phantom and Bentley Flying Spur, and other locations include Chatsworth, Oxford and Stonehenge.

www.wilsonchauffeurservices.co.uk

6. Cotswolds in a Cobra

While the idea of hiring a supercar might appeal, the reality of driving a car worth £250,000 can be quite intimidating. Great Escape Cars have the answer; their beautiful, scarlet AC Cobra is a replica - complete with a proper V8 engine, and is just one of a huge fleet of classic cars to hire, including vintage Mercedes, Corvettes and Porsche. The company has a base in the Cotswolds, making it easy to take to the quiet country lanes that link the beautiful villages of Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Chipping Campden and Bourton-on-the-Water. Cars can be hired for a day, weekend or longer, from the company’s headquarters in Feckenham, Worcestershire, around two hours drive west of London.

www.greatescape.cars.co.uk

7. Yorkshire Dales in Style

The rolling hills of Yorkshire offer some of the most beautiful, tranquil countryside in England, dotted with wonderful places to picnic – such as the picturesque Aysgarth Falls – a stepped waterfall – and the pretty village of Kettlewell. The Black Swan Hotel at Helmsley has paired up with the Yorkshire Chauffeur Company to offer day tours of the Yorkshire countryside in a gleaming new Range Rover, with customers able to choose the itinerary, and decide how long they want to stop in each location. Pick from Bronte Country – the landscapes characterised in novels such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, the elegant...
spa town of Harrogate or the dramatic coastline. Helmsley is around 3.5 hours drive north of London.

www.blackswan-helmsley.co.uk

8. Wales by Jaguar

The dramatic landscapes of Wales - the soaring peaks of the Brecon Beacons, the spectacular coast at Pembrokeshire, the thousand-year-old castles that litter the hills - are best explored by car, particularly if someone else is driving. British Heritage Chauffeur Tours offer guided tours of Wales, with accommodation in five-star country house hotels and including visits to iconic sites such as the Italianate village of Portmeirion, the book town of Hay on Wye and the world-famous Snowdonia railway. Guests can choose from an ultra-luxurious Jaguar XJL, a Land Rover Discovery or, if the group is bigger, a Mercedes Vianos People Carrier.

www.bchtours.co.uk

9. Tour the UK in a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce

Discover Britain’s history and natural beauty in a classic chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce. Taking in the rugged beauty of Wordsworth’s Lake District and James Herriot’s glorious Yorkshire Dales, to the historic Roman city of York, the magnificent ancestral home of Sir Winston Churchill, Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon and the ancient monument Stonehenge, tours don’t come much more comfortable or comprehensive. From stone-built farmhouses and 15th Century thatched cottages to luxurious city-centre hotels, the accommodation has been specially selected for optimum luxury.

www.ukluxurytours.co.uk

10. Tour Balmoral on a luxury landrover safari

Experience stunning mountain scenery on a tour of Balmoral Estate, the Queen’s Scottish home. Spot birds of prey, red squirrels, red deer, red grouse, black grouse, snow bunting and salmon with Swarovski binoculars while travelling through the Estate farm, old Caledonian pine forest and heather high up the flanks of Lochnagar, one of Scotland’s most famous mountains.

www.balmoralcastle.com
All aboard – luxury on the water
From going on a Scottish cruise enjoyed by The Queen to experiencing the wondrous ‘Stream in the Sky’ in Wales, right through to sleeping in a luxury ship docked in the heart of London, these aquatic adventures offer a unique way to enjoy Britain in style.

1. Sunborn Yacht Hotel, London

London’s newest, floating boutique hotel, Sunborn, is a super yacht moored in East London’s regenerated Royal Victoria Dock. A sweeping, glass, double staircase, marble floors and teak panelling adorn the public areas. Most of the 136 suites and rooms have balconies, but the best views of the skyscrapers of Canary Wharf and the river are from the spacious decks. Sunborn is five minutes by taxi from London City Airport and the nearest station is Custom House on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). Double rooms with breakfast are from £160 a night.

www.sunbornlondon.com

2. Hebridean Princess ship, the Hebrides, Western Scotland

There is a country house party atmosphere aboard charming small ship Hebridean Princess with drinks before dinner in the lounge, chintzy bedrooms and impeccable service. Queen Elizabeth herself has enjoyed family holidays on board twice. Leisurely itineraries sailing the beautiful Hebrides and Highland coast in western Scotland include bird watching on remote islands, visits to great castles and gardens, and bikes to borrow for independent exploration. Hebridean Princess sails from Oban, about three hours’ scenic drive northwest from Glasgow. From £1,090pp for a fully inclusive four-night cruise. www.hebridean.co.uk

3. The Magna Carta barge, Hampton Court to Henley-on-Thames

One thousand years of history unfold on a week’s cruise through the Home Counties on the Thames west of London. Just eight passengers in four luxurious suites are waited on hand and foot aboard the Magna Carta, a roomy former Dutch grain barge with a hot tub and herb garden on deck. Tours with an expert guide go to Hampton Court palace once owned by Henry VIII, Windsor Castle built by William the Conqueror, Eton College whose old boys (alumni) include Princes William and Harry, and Henley-on-Thames, the waterside town where the quintessentially English rowing regatta takes place every summer. The fully inclusive six-night cruise, from £2,690pp, includes pick up from Central London for the one-hour drive to the boat.

www.gobarging.com

4. Glen Tarsan and Glen Marsan boats, Loch Ness, Scotland

Anchored overnight beneath the ruins of ancient Urquhart Castle on peaceful Loch Ness, your former fishing boat won’t disturb the legendary monster. Twins Glen Tarsan and Glen Marsan have been converted into luxury vessels taking just 11 passengers on the 60-mile

Make like The Queen and take a trip on luxury ship
The Hebridean Princess around the Scottish coast
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(97kms) Caledonian Canal waterway linking the lochs of the Great Glen between Inverness in the far northeast of Scotland and the town of Fort William in the west. Your captain will navigate the eight locks of Neptune’s Staircase while the chef prepares gourmet meals.

Six-night cruises departing in September and October in 2015 and 2016 are from £1,995pp. Inverness is 3.5 hours from Edinburgh by train.

www.themajesticline.co.uk

5. Lady Rose narrowboat on the Llangollen Canal, Denbighshire Wales

No wonder they call it the Stream in the Sky. The world’s highest canal boat crossing stretches 1,007 feet (307m) with the River Dee rushing a giddy 126 feet (38m) below. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct in northeast Wales was completed in 1805, a feat of engineering by Thomas Telford. Farther along the Llangollen canal the Chirk Aqueduct crosses the border into England. Enjoy the views from newly built, slow-moving traditional narrowboat Lady Rose while your captain and crew do the work.

Llangollen is about 18 miles southwest of Chester. A week’s full-board cruise in September 2016 is £820pp.

www.ladylinehotelboats.co.uk

6. Cunard Line’s 175th anniversary, Liverpool

Most famous as the birthplace of The Beatles, Liverpool in the northwest of England has a rich maritime history, too. Cunard, the great passenger shipping line, was founded here in 1840 to ply the Atlantic between Britain and the Americas. Today the lively docks area has a modern cruise terminal a short walk from the Maritime and Slavery museums and Tate Liverpool art gallery. On 25 May 2015 Cunard’s three magnificent ocean liners, Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria will line up on the River Mersey to mark the line’s 175th anniversary. You can be on board for the celebrations sailing on Queen Victoria for six nights round Britain, departing from Southampton on May 22. Fares are from £1,049pp. Liverpool is 2 hours 15 minutes by train from London Euston and Southampton is 1 hour 15 minutes by train from London Waterloo.

www.cunard.com

7. Greenwich Cruise Terminal, London

London’s first purpose-built cruise terminal is scheduled to open in 2017 at Greenwich, a World Heritage Site on the Thames in southeast London. The new terminal complex, which will incorporate a 250-room hotel, is right on the doorstep to visit the National Maritime Museum, the Prime Meridian Line (where you can straddle 0° longitude with a foot in each hemisphere), the Old Royal Naval College designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century and the 19th-century Cutty Sark, the fastest sailing ship in the world. Greenwich is 20 minutes from central London by train and also served by various riverboat services including Thames Clippers.

www.visitgreenwich.org.uk

www.londoncitycruiseport.co.uk
8. Silver Darling motor launch, London

Sightseeing from a riverboat on the Thames gives great views of London’s most iconic landmarks. The Houses of Parliament and tower of Big Ben, the London Eye big wheel, St Paul’s cathedral, the Tower of London and Tower Bridge, are just some. You can charter a private tour aboard sleek, Silver Darling for up to 12 passengers which has its own pier in front of the Savoy Hotel near Waterloo Bridge. The cost of £950 an hour includes soft drinks and a hamper of nibbles from Fortnum & Mason. Champagne and a guide can be arranged. [www.silverfleet.co.uk](http://www.silverfleet.co.uk)

9. Charter a yacht around the Pembrokeshire coast

Sharpen your sailing skills on The Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 29.2, a luxury yacht that's perfect for seeing the Pembrokeshire coast in style. Take in 24 miles of sheltered waters extending from the upper reaches of the Cleddau Estuary, rich in history and estuary bird life, to St Anne's Head where the waterway meets the Atlantic Ocean. Relax and enjoy the ride in the yacht's teak interior with two separate double cabins and all the creature comforts needed for an unforgettable journey.

[www.pembrokeshirecruising.co.uk](http://www.pembrokeshirecruising.co.uk)

5 more luxury travel experiences

From a horse drawn carriage to a helicopter, there are lots of unique ways to see Britain.

1. Take a horse-drawn carriage through London

Experience a bygone British era in a classic open-topped carriage, pulled by majestic black stallions and driven by coachmen in traditional liveries. Pass through the Royal Parks, past Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square and Westminster Cathedral, just as Diana Ross and Lady GaGa have. Stop for lunch at Alain Ducasse’s three Michelin star restaurant (ask for the central Table Lumière which is surrounded by 4,500 shimmering fibre optics) before returning to Harrods in Knightsbridge to shop for the finest goods.

[www.westwayscarriagehorses.co.uk](http://www.westwayscarriagehorses.co.uk)

2. Fly like a celebrity in a seaplane

Exploring the magnificent Scottish West Coast by iconic seaplane is one of the world’s greatest journeys and one enjoyed by celebrities including Susan Boyle, Sir Steve Redgrave, Patsy Kensit, Jackie Stewart, Bill Bailey, Bear Grylls and Ben Stiller. Board a modern, quiet and spacious seaplane and take a First Class window seat for an exhilarating view of the wild landscape. Special trips can be organised to inaccessible lochs or the five star Cameron House Hotel for a meal at Martin Wishart’s Michelin star restaurant.

[www.lochlomondseaplanes.com](http://www.lochlomondseaplanes.com)
3. Charter the Royal Scotsman to the Highlands

The most intimate way to enjoy the Royal Scotsman is to charter the train for an exclusive party. Enjoy private use of the restaurant, customised menus (think Aberdeen Angus beef and rivers of wild salmon), tailor-made itineraries, excursions and entertainment. All the train’s cars, save the 1928-era diner, are of 1960s vintage equipment with varnished woods, polished brass and fine fabrics; the perfect surroundings to settle down on a sumptuous tartan-covered sofa and enjoy the spectacular Highlands scenery. [www.belmond.com](http://www.belmond.com)

4. Fly a private balloon at The Bristol Balloon Fiesta

For a once-in-a-lifetime journey, fly with over 140 colourful balloons from the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta in your very own private basket. Perfect for a couple who desire an exclusively romantic trip, you’ll take in panoramic views of beautiful Bristol and its rolling cityscape, not to mention the sight of your fellow ballooners bobbing in the sky. Top the dream-like experience off with a glass of the finest chilled champagne on touchdown. [www.baileyballoons.co.uk](http://www.baileyballoons.co.uk)

5. Avoid the London crowds in a helicopter

If you want to enjoy the relaxation a stay in a countryside hotel brings yet also indulge in some of the world’s best retail therapy, there is no need to battle the crowds for a day of shopping in the capital. London Battersea Heliport allows speedy access to and from the City, using helicopters to escape the cluttered road network in and around London. The safest state-of-the-art helicopters are available for charter, and a luxury VIP departure terminal and customer lounge with catering complete an easy and oh-so-speedy jaunt. [www.flymenow.com](http://www.flymenow.com)

**Explore Norfolk and England’s ‘Royal Coast’**

Norfolk, in the East of England, is one of the places that the Royal Family loves most, heading here for its unspoiled countryside and huge skies. The Queen and her family traditionally spend Christmas at their estate of Sandringham and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge will soon call it home too. Prince William will work with the East Anglian Air Ambulance, and he and his family will live at Anmer Hall, a mansion that forms part of the Sandringham estate. It was originally bought by Queen Victoria’s oldest son, Edward VII.

The Royals often get to Norfolk on the train, joining other passengers at Kings Cross in London for the 95 minute journey to Kings Lynn, a historic market town surrounded by farmland in the north of the county. The Coasthopper bus will take you to some of the sights, but ideally you’d need a car to really explore the area including the pretty villages, grand country houses and long sandy beaches that make it so popular with everyone, not just the Royal
One place that combines village with country estate and sandy beach is Holkham Hall. Owned by the Earl of Leicester and his family, the house has a series of state rooms with paintings by Rubens and Van Dyke. As well as a village with the Victoria, a charming hotel and pub, you’ll also find a spectacular beach surrounded by pine trees. It’s so large you’ll need several hours to explore it properly - and it’s long been somewhere members of the Royal Family like to head to - you might see them walking their dogs here. (www.holkham.co.uk)

Houghton is another stunning house in North Norfolk close to Sandringham. Built in 1720 in the Palladian style, it’s full of priceless works of art - both old and contemporary. There’s an artist in residence and the sculpture park in the gardens contains works by James Turrell, Richard Long and Zhan Wang. (www.houghtonhall.com)

Parts of Norfolk are very posh indeed, as a visit to Burnham Market makes clear. This small village, surrounding a green, is stuffed with chic boutiques, antiques shops and delicatessens; try Ruby & Tallulah for edgy European fashion labels and Coastal Country for homewares. (www.rubyandtallulah.co.uk, www.coastalcountrystyle.co.uk) It’s no surprise that its nickname is Chelsea-on-Sea - named after the upmarket London neighbourhood - and its hub is definitely the Hoste Arms, a hotel and restaurant in the centre - in summer the seats outside are usually packed. (www.thehoste.com)

The Duchess of Cambridge - who loves shopping for antiques - is also known for popping into the antique shops that dot the county, including the Old Stables in the grounds of Brayfield Hall (www.bayfieldhall.com). There’s also Holt, a town just inland from the coast; places here to check out include Richard Scott Antiques and Old Town for fashion. (www.old-town.co.uk)

There will be plenty for Prince George and his new brother or sister to enjoy in Norfolk too. Family-friendly days out include Drove Orchards. This farm has over 150 varieties of apples, a farm shop and restaurant, stylish clothes shops for adults and children and an adventure playground. It’s about a half hour drive from Sandringham, near the coast at Hunstanton. (http://droveorchards.com). Also nearby, there’s a nature reserve at Titchwell Marsh which has regular ranger sessions and pond-dipping for children and plenty of peace - Norfolk is famously good for birdwatching, with many migrating species, including Canada geese.

www.rspb.org.uk

On windy days you can see the sails turn at the Bircham Windmill. Over a hundred years old, it’s been fully restored. Children can make their own loaves in baking sessions - and watch sheep being milked - and there’s a bakery that uses the mill’s own flour to make bread. (www.birchamwindmill.co.uk)

The younger Royals have been known to drop into the Dabbling Duck in Great Massingham - it’s a classic country pub set
between two ponds with a great reputation for food - and beer. Prince William and Prince Harry have both visited (www.thedabblingduck.co.uk)

Another popular destination for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge is the Kings Head in Great Bircham, a 15 minute drive from Sandringham. Specialising in traditional British food - menu choices include fish and chips, local specialities such as Cromer Crab and classic British dishes such as roast beef. And children are treated like - well - little princes with healthy but delicious food. You can stay here too; rooms start at £99 including breakfast (www.the-kings-head-bircham.co.uk).

You’ll find plenty of plush hotels in the area: Titchwell Manor is a Victorian farmhouse overlooking the sea that has had a glamorous makeover. With two restaurants and 27 bedrooms, it’s one of the smartest places to stay in Norfolk, with bold colour schemes and inventive food. Rooms start at £95, including breakfast. (www.titchwellmanor.com)

If your budget doesn’t stretch to this, Sandringham has two campsites. Run by the Camping and Caravanning Club, and the Caravan Club, there are plenty of pitches in this woodland site and there’s a shop that sells food made on the estate (www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk, www.caravanclub.co.uk).

Also on the Sandringham estate itself is Park House, which was the childhood home of Princess Diana. It is now a hotel for people with disabilities and their carers, run by the Leonard Cheshire charity. All the rooms have been fully converted and there is medical care available; rooms start at £79 a night (www.parkhousehotel.org.uk).

When the Royal Family aren’t staying here, Sandringham is open to the public. Many of the rooms used by the Queen when she stays can be seen and there’s a museum that contains classic cars, royal toys and coaches. You’ll also gain admittance to the gardens. And should you want to sleep there, some of the cottages can be rented as holiday lets! (www.sandringhamestate.co.uk) Arrive at Sandringham in style aboard the British Pullman, a luxury train that takes you from London to Norfolk, providing brunch and bellinis on the way there, and champagne and dinner on the return leg! A day visiting the estate in between makes for a luxurious way to see the Royal residence (£395 per person; www.belmond.com/british-pullman-train.

Sandringham, where The Queen and family spend Christmas. By gracious permission of H.M. The Queen
**Luxury Wedding Venues**

Get hitched in style in Britain - choose from the set of Downton Abbey or a famous art gallery in the heart of London, or go all out in a Welsh or Scottish castle.

1. **Highclere Castle, Highclere, Hampshire, Southern England**

One of the most famous British castles in the world, thanks to its role as home to the Crawley family in the blockbusting TV series Downton Abbey. Brides can prepare for the ceremony in one of the castle bedrooms, walk through the upper gallery and down the sweeping stairs into the Saloon, which is licensed for marriages. Smaller receptions can be held in the Dining Room, or the Victorian Library holds 100-120 guests. Highclere is 15 mins by taxi from Newbury Station, which is 50 mins from London Paddington.

[www.highclerecastle.co.uk](http://www.highclerecastle.co.uk)

2. **Portmeirion, Gwynedd, North Wales**

A beautiful Italian-style village on the north-west coast of Wales, the ice-cream coloured, ornate buildings took fifty years to complete. Weddings have been held in the village for over eighty years; the combination of a beachfront location and the picturesque cottages make it an ideal choice. Ceremonies can take place in the Town Hall, hotel or beneath the spectacular battlements of Castell Deudrath, with wedding breakfasts held in the beautiful art deco dining room of the hotel, overlooking the beach. Portmeirion is around 2.5 hours' drive west of Manchester.

[www.portmeirion-village.com](http://www.portmeirion-village.com)

3. **Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, South East England**

If you want to get married among the gleaming spires of Oxford, there’s nowhere more unique than at the stately Ashmolean Museum, dating back to the 17th century and home to thousands of years of history. The licence extends across the whole museum, so you can choose to marry surrounded by the greatest collection of Chinese art in the world, or be watched over by Greek statues dating back centuries. Oxford is one hour by train from London Paddington. [www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org).

4. **Ardanaiseig, Argyll, Scotland**

The wild beauty of the Scottish countryside makes a spectacular wedding backdrop, complemented perfectly by the 19th century elegance of the Ardanaiseig Hotel, filled with antique furniture and opulent rooms. Weddings can take place in the bay-windowed drawing room, or anywhere in the lushly beautiful grounds - including a specially-built amphitheatre, right by the tranquil waters of the loch. For the wedding night, the Boat Shed is a stylish hideaway for two, right by the water's edge. The hotel is around 2hrs 15 mins' drive north-west of Glasgow.

[www.ardanaseig.com](http://www.ardanaseig.com)
5. Royal Pavilion, Brighton, South East England

A British icon of design, the Pavilion – with its onion domes and oriental styling – was originally built for the Prince Regent, in the late 18th century. Inside, the opulent design - chinoiserie canvases, glittering chandeliers and palm-tree pillars – make it a unique choice for a wedding, choose from the larger Music Room or the more intimate Red Room, which is not normally open to the public. Brighton is 50 minutes by train from London Victoria.

www.brighton-hove-rpml.org.uk

6. Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, West Midlands, England

Experience rural England at its most beautiful, with a wedding in the dramatic medieval castle that overlooks the pretty market town of Ludlow. Ceremonies take place within Castle House, with receptions in the stunning Beacon Room, with wonderful medieval features including carved fireplaces and sculpted wall friezes. Guests can mingle in the private Castle house gardens, and the bride and groom can spend the first night of their honeymoon in one of the castle’s luxury apartments. Ludlow is around 3.5 hours by train from London Paddington, changing at Newport.

www.ludlowcastle.com

7. Somerset House, London

A beautiful neo-classical building, rising from the banks of the Thames, Somerset House was once government offices and is now one of the city’s most popular arts and culture venues. Brides can make a spectacular entrance through the dramatic arches of the Strand Vestibule, and once the ceremony has taken place in one of the beautiful 19th century rooms, photographs can be taken and guests can mingle in the beautiful courtyard, dotted with fountains. The nearest underground stations are Waterloo and Temple.

www.somersethouse.org.uk

8. Montalto Estate, County Down, Northern Ireland

Montalto invites you to become the Lord or Lady of the manor with the attention of your personal butler, the scrumptious food of renowned chefs and 400 acres of unspoilt countryside to gaze over and explore. When it comes to your special day, the venue goes all out – and was justly voted Best Wedding Venue in the UK by Hudson’s Heritage. Take over the quaint and charming Georgian white house – the perfect backdrop for photographs - and let your guests mingle amid the fine collection of Irish and European art and antiques inside.

www.montaltoestate.com

9. Dalhousie Castle, Midlothian, Scotland

Marry surrounded by history, in the breathtaking Dalhousie Castle which dates back to the 13th century. The castle has its own chapel, where ceremonies can take place – made all the more memorable by the famous ‘owl ring delivery’, where the wedding rings are delivered by a trained owl. The wedding breakfast can take place in the Dungeon restaurant, surrounded by suits of armour, or in the
elegant Orangery, with a traditional Scottish piper playing in the background. Dalhousie is around 25 mins by taxi from Edinburgh airport; helicopter transfers are possible.

www.dalhousiecastle.co.uk

10. Chateau Rhianfa, Anglesey, North Wales

Rhianfa combines the elegance of a classic French chateau with the beauty of the North Wales landscape, to create a really unique wedding location. There are four rooms where weddings can take place, including the Music Room, which has stunning views across the Menai Straits to Snowdonia, and the chateau has sixteen bedrooms – including a sumptuous bridal suite. Rhianfa’s wedding planners can assist with all aspects of the Big Day. Anglesey is around two hours’ drive west of Manchester.

www.chateaurhianfa.com

Honeymoon luxury

On honeymoon, switch off completely and focus on your new husband or wife in beautiful Britain – while enjoying pampering, excellent food and decadent cocktails. From a luxury train to rugged Scotland, through to a castle in Wales or a treehouse in England, there are plenty of places to indulge in romance in Britain.

1. Hell Bay, Bryher, Scilly Isles, South West England

Locations don’t come more romantic than the beautiful Scilly Islands, located 30 miles off the Cornish coast. Hell Bay is an elegant boutique hotel on the island of Bryher, with 25 chic suites – honeymooners should book The Emperor suite, which has stunning sea views from every room, and a spacious private decked terrace. The white-sand beaches on Bryher are wonderfully unspoilt and the hotel can organise excursions to the world-renowned Tresco Abbey Gardens and the other islands. Skybus operates flights from Exeter airport to the island of St Mary’s; Exeter Station is three hours from London Paddington.

www.hellbay.co.uk

2. Burgh Island, Bigbury on Sea, Devon, South West England

Few newlyweds can say they reached their honeymoon by ‘sea tractor’, but when the tide comes in, it’s the only way to reach this is a truly unique hotel. Famous as a favourite retreat for the author Agatha Christie, the hotel has maintained the art deco design, feel and atmosphere it would have had during the 1930’s when Christie, and other famous names such as Noel Coward and Josephine Baker were regular guests. Old-school glamour is expected, with black tie dinner dances and cocktail hour in the elegant Palm Court bar.

www.burghisland.com

3. Amberley Castle, West Sussex, South East England

Tucked away behind a 60-foot wall and iron portcullis, 900-year-old Amberley Castle is the ideal English retreat for a luxurious honeymoon. Surrounded by the lush countryside of the South Downs National Park, the Castle feels intimate rather than grand, with just 19 rooms and 12 acres of Amberley Castle offers honeymoon couples a romantic and luxurious escape from wedding planning!
4. Ruthin Castle, North Wales

Follow in Royal footsteps at Ruthin, dating back to the 13th century and originally built for Edward I. Stay in the Prince of Wales suite, named after King Edward VII (depicted in the Kings Speech) who stayed in the castle, and join one of the castle's Medieval Banquets for an unforgettable honeymoon dinner. The Moat Spa offers an excellent range of treatments to help you relax after the stresses of the Big Day, and the castle's wooded grounds are perfect for romantic strolls. Ruthin is around one hour’s drive west of Manchester.

www.ruthincastle.co.uk

5. The Treehouse at Harptree Court, Somerset, South West England

For those looking for a slightly more eccentric honeymoon, the current vogue for treehouse accommodation offers an unforgettable experience. The Treehouse at Harptree Court is a luxurious billet up in the leafy canopy on the edge of a lake, with a large verandah, spacious kitchen and dining area and a wonderful copper bath with treetop views. Guests can take breakfast in the main house, play croquet on the pristine lawn and book relaxing spa treatments. Harptree Court is around 2.5 hours' drive south-west of London.

www.canopyandstars.co.uk

6. Belmond Royal Scotsman, through Scotland

Climb on board one of the world’s most beautiful trains, for a honeymoon that takes in the lochs and mountains of Scotland, all seen from the comfort of your own elegant compartment. Royal Scotsman journeys begin in Edinburgh, taking just 36 guests, before gliding up to the Highlands. There are stops en route for walks on unspoilt beaches and visits to historic Scottish sites, before returning to the train for formal dinners in the glamorous dining car. The train departs from Waverley station.

www.belmond.com/royalscotsman

The Laundry, Ty Mawr, Powys, Mid Wales

Don’t be put off by the name – the Laundry is a beautifully restored 15th century building that is part of the Ty Mawr estate, tucked away in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The perfect honeymoon hideaway, the oak-beamed bedroom comes with fluffy dressing gowns and slippers and a suitably luxy bathroom, while outside the pretty private patio and garden is perfect for romantic alfresco suppers. Ty Mawr is around 3.5 hours' drive west of London.

www.tymawrcollection.co.uk
8. Ham Yard Hotel, London

London’s hippest new hotel makes a fantastic base for a honeymoon spent discovering the sights and sounds of the British capital. Sip cocktails in the giddily stylish bar, lounge in the beautiful rooftop garden and, if you book the Terrace Suite, you can toast to your new life while overlooking London’s unique skyline. The restaurants and bars of Soho, as well as the theatres of Shaftesbury Avenue are all within a few moments’ walk, and the concierge staff at Ham Yard will help plan the perfect honeymoon programme. Nearest tube: Piccadilly Circus

www.firmdale.com

9. Glenapp Castle, Ballantrae, South West Scotland

Honeymoon like a Scottish Laird at 19th century Glenapp; a gorgeous country house designed in traditional Baronial style that is now a luxury hotel. Oak-panelled hallways link opulent bedrooms you won’t want to leave; for the last word in luxury book the palatial Earl of Inchcape suite. The gardens are a joy to explore, from the walled kitchen garden to woodland strolls, croquet on the lawn or even a game of tennis. Dinners, watching the sunset over the Mull of Kintyre, are a real highlight. The hotel will arrange transfers to Girvan station, around ninety minutes from Glasgow Central by train.

www.glenappcastle.com

10. Belle Isle, Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

Hole up on your honeymoon in an Irish castle on its own private island. Belle Isle is a 470-acre estate spread over eight islands: inhabited since the 12th century, the estate has a range of self-catering accommodation that will provide you with the much needed peace and quiet post-wedding. If you always dreamed of getting married in a castle, Belle Isle can be hired for exclusive use and you can treat your guests to a stay in the residence of nobles for generations.

http://belle-isle.com
**Tee off in style**

Since Scotland is the nation that created golf, Great Britain naturally has some of the world's most prestigious courses. Here is our pick of the most glamorous clubs, the most luxurious golf resorts and specialist operators that can get you onto the most exclusive fairways.

**Royal St George's, Kent, south-east England**

Kent is home to some of the country's most feted links courses with the pick of the bunch found amid rolling dunes near the historic town of Sandwich. Fast greens and changing directions provide a formidable challenge, while the club's fine three-course lunch is regarded as one of the best on the circuit, with five-star accommodation nearby at The Salutation, a house designed by revered architect Lutyens.

*Fees from £80.*

[www.royalstgeorges.com](http://www.royalstgeorges.com)

**The Grove, Hertfordshire, south-east England**

The former home of the Earls of Clarendon is now a luxury golf resort set in 300 acres of classic English countryside that provides seclusion yet is based just 18 miles from London. Perfect for pampering, its fully equipped spa includes a massage pool, while one of three restaurants is at the heart of the 18th century mansion. Its championship course, meanwhile, is always kept in pristine condition.

*Fees from £99.*

[www.thegrove.co.uk/](http://www.thegrove.co.uk/)

**Formby Hall, Lancashire, north-west England**

England's north-west coast is home to several of Britain's finest courses, including the Royal Birkdale and Royal Lytham & St Annes. Formby Hall Golf Resort & Spa makes an ideal base to explore this rich landscape, with its own championship course, one of the region's best restaurants and the PGA Golf Academy with qualified professionals and cutting-analysis on hand to help both beginners and experienced players.

*Fees from £25.*

[www.formbyhallgolfresort.co.uk](http://www.formbyhallgolfresort.co.uk)

**Gleneagles, Perthshire, Scotland**

There can be no more glamorous location to indulge your passion for golf than the French château-style Gleneagles Hotel set in 850 acres of glorious Scottish countryside. The resort is home to three top-class championship courses, including the host venue for the 2014 Ryder Cup. The resort also boasts two Michelin-starred restaurant, Andrew Fairlie, offering French-influenced cuisine inspired by the best local produce. *Fees from £70.* [www.gleneagles.com](http://www.gleneagles.com)

*Gleneagles in Scotland is the place to golf, having just hosted the 2014 Ryder Cup*
Old Course Experience, Fife, Scotland

On Scotland's beautiful east coast, St Andrew's is the undisputed home of golf and the dream of most players is surely to play its 600-year-old Old Course. As entry is usually by ballot, you can guarantee a game on this hallowed ground by taking up a package offered by The Old Course Experience. Bespoke programs include access to further courses and residences such as the five-star Old Course Hotel.

*Programs from £2180.*

www.oldcourse-experience.com/index.htm

Turnberry Resort, Ayrshire, Scotland

With stunning west coast views of the Mull of Kintyre and Isle of Arran, Turnberry's Ailsa has arguably the best views of any Open Championship course. This craggy headland has seen some of the most dramatic moments in golf's competitive history, though expert tuition is on hand to suit all skill levels. The hotel that opened in 1906 maintains Edwardian standards of elegance, especially with a traditional afternoon repast in the Grand Tea Lounge.

*Fees from £90.*

www.turnberryresort.co.uk/

Heligolf, various locations, Scotland

The ultimate means of taking in a range of iconic courses in the land that devised the game is by chartering your own private helicopter for a tour that could include some of Scotland's most exclusive greens, including the private Carnegie Club at secluded Skibo Castle in the majestic Highlands. Tpegs, led by former Ryder Cup player and TV analyst Andrew Coltart, can even ferry you to landing sites in a Bentley limousine.

*Prices on request.*

www.tpegs.com

Celtic Manor, Newport, Wales

This plush resort has hosted everything from the Ryder Cup to a Nato summit, so you can be sure alls needs are catered for in five-star luxury. Set in 2000 acres of Usk Valley parkland, Celtic Manor offers tranquility and plenty of challenges on three championship courses, with views across the Severn Estuary to remind us the resort is easily accessible from many parts of the country.

*Fees from £28.*

www.celtic-manor.com
Vale Resort, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales

Set in mature woodland, the Vale Resort's twin championship courses, including one of the longest outside the US, offer peaceful surroundings and rare challenges. You may first need to take advantage of the academy's state-of-the-art video technology. The Vale is also home to Wales's largest spa, offering an unrivalled range of treatments.

*Golf breaks from £69 per person.*

www.vale-hotel.com

Lough Erne, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland

Rory McIlroy's exploits have put Northern Ireland on the golfing map and this modern complex is the most luxurious place in the province to enjoy the game. Set on a peninsula between two lakes, wherever you look there are gorgeous views and watery hazards. Northern Ireland's 2014 hotel of the year provides sumptuous suites and an authentic Thai spa, though you can also rent hi-spec loughside lodges for extra privacy.

*Fees from £50.*

www.lougherneresort.com/index.html

The Summer Season

Britain's summer social season evokes a time of genteel social pursuits and flamboyant parties, and was traditionally when the aristocracy embarked on several months of 'see and be seen' events at all the most important social events. It was the annual period when elite society would hold debutante balls and dinner parties, which would frequently involve matchmaking between the children of marriageable age from the nobility and gentry.

Today, what is regarded as 'the season' revolves around summer's top sporting and arts events, typically between April and August, and is a fantastic chance to dress up (hats are encouraged!) and indulge in some typical British high society living.

The horse races

Kicking off the horse-racing season in grand style is the *Investec Epsom Derby* (5 – 6 June in 2015), a horse meet that has been thrilling racegoers since 1780. Held at Epsom Racecourse in Surrey, less than an hour’s train journey on frequent services from London, you can channel lavish and glamorous, by visiting on Ladies Day on 5 June, the perfect opportunity to wear your finest. If you buy a ticket to the Queen's Stand on either of the derby days, the men have to sport black or grey morning dress with a top hat or national costume, while ladies are expected to wear a fascinator or a hat. There's always the chance you may get to spot a royal or two. [www.epsomdowns.co.uk/racing/investec-derby-festival](http://www.epsomdowns.co.uk/racing/investec-derby-festival)

*Royal Ascot* (16 – 20 June in 2015) near Windsor is, of course, a notable event for royal-spotting. The Queen attends with various members of the royal family (she has done so every year since 1945), arriving each day in a horse-drawn procession from Windsor Castle. There have been royalties in attendance since Royal Ascot was founded in 1711 by Queen Anne and has been attended by 11 monarchs since the 18th century.
The event is as well-known for its stylish dressing as for the horse racing, particularly on Ladies Day when spectacular hats often make the news headlines. To enter the Royal Enclosure, you have to be nominated by someone who has attended the enclosure for at least the last four years - this is where the most luxurious, stylish dressing is expected. [www.ascot.co.uk/royal-ascot-2015/royal-ascot](http://www.ascot.co.uk/royal-ascot-2015/royal-ascot)

You can appreciate all the action in a private box with spectacular views over the course. With large private dining rooms, flat screen televisions, bar and at least two staff to ensure the champagne flows freely during a four course luncheon and Afternoon Tea, everything is taken care of. [www.royalascotviphospitality.co.uk](http://www.royalascotviphospitality.co.uk)

Propping up the end of the summer racing season is Glorious Goodwood (July/August - 2015 dates TBC), set in beautiful countryside in the South Downs, near Chichester (a two-hour drive from London). This is a five-day festival meeting with a rich horseracing heritage - it’s been hosting the Sport of Kings - as horseracing is sometimes referred to - for 200 years. Goodwood is one of Britain’s great estates and historic homes whose horseracing roots started life as a flat horseracing course for local officers in 1802. [www.goodwood.co.uk](http://www.goodwood.co.uk)

**The watersports**

There’s nothing so quintessentially British as a summer’s day spent watching a regatta (rowing race), and nothing that epitomises the destination’s rowing heritage as much as the Henley Royal Regatta (1 – 5 July in 2015). Attracting thousands of visitors over a five-day period, spectators can cheer on rowers in more than 200 races that include every standard from new crews to Olympians. It’s a regatta that’s been enjoyed since 1839, and is a fun social event too. So pop on your straw boater, pack up a picnic and sit riverside to experience some of the world’s finest rowing just over an hour away by train from London. [www.hrr.co.uk](http://www.hrr.co.uk)

If sea sailing is more your style, then Cowes Week is the place to check out. Between 8 – 15 August in 2015, the biggest event on the sailing calendar takes place off the coast of the Isle of Wight, south England, and has played a part in the summer social calendar since 1826. Today spectators will witness more than 1,000 yachts and 8,000 competitors take part in first-class sailing. While primarily a sailing regatta, visitors can enjoy a whole host of entertainment throughout the week, from live music to stalls and markets along the marina. [www.aamcowesweek.co.uk](http://www.aamcowesweek.co.uk)

**The ball games**

The Wimbledon Championships, held at the end of June, are a major date in both the sporting and social calendar - the young Royals are notably tennis-mad, and the whole event has become as much about who's watching as who is playing. Only a 20-minute train journey from central London, the tournament, which is now arguably the most coveted of the Grand Slam prizes, was created back in 1877 and attracts the best in international tennis. Book onto the Wimbledon VIP experience for the best tickets, along with 5-star
accommodation, the finest hospitality at The Gatsby Club, just a few steps from the court and, of course, a traditional Wimbledon afternoon tea with strawberries and cream.

www.wimbledon-experience.com

Also a firm fixture on the summer season calendar is polo, a sport that became popular in Britain in the mid-19th century when army officers saw it being played while stationed in India. One of today’s most prestigious polo tournaments is the Cartier Queen’s Cup at the Guards Polo Club near Windsor, less than an hour’s train journey from central London. It’s a highlight of the social calendar as well as on the polo scene, where champagne and caviar are plentiful and a prince or princess may never be far from sight. Finals day is always attended by the Queen. www.guardspoloclub.com/tournaments/cartier-queens-cup-2014

If you want to learn to play polo, you can saddle up at luxury hotel Coworth Park in Berkshire, South East England, part of the Dorchester Collection, where hotel residents can experience the thrill of riding beautiful horses and having a go at Polo. The season takes place between April and September, with the onsite Guards Polo Club running matches throughout – including the influential Indian Empire Shield – and the Guards Polo Academy offering the chance to learn and train with one of the most experienced players of the game, Andrew Hine. www.dorchestercollection.com/en/ascot/coworth-park/equestrian-polo/guards-polo-academy

There’s also Cirencester Polo Academy in Gloucestershire, South West England, where professional coaches offer training days, lessons, instructional chukkas and the chance to play mini tournaments. www.cirencesterpolo.co.uk

And don’t forget the most English of all the sports – cricket. It may have some in-depth rules to follow, but Test cricket is popular, with two Test matches – matches that last five consecutive days – held at the historic Lord’s Cricket Ground in Marylebone, London, every summer. Fancy dress is not allowed – as you may see at some other cricket matches – and dress code is generally smart. It’s also home to the annual Eton versus Harrow (two of England’s most exclusive private schools) cricket match. www.lords.org

The arts

Indulge in some of the finest operatic performances with a ticket to the annual Glyndebourne Festival, which runs between 21 May – 30 August in 2015 in the county of Sussex, just over an hour by train from London. Offering a programme of six operas covering 120 performances in a state-of-the-art auditorium, part of fun social element is the chance to relax, socialise, picnic and drink champagne in the beautiful grounds during the long mid-performance interval of 80 minutes. Here you'll see festival goers of all ages dressed in their finest – a great chance to see and be seen! The 2015 Festival bill includes Donizetti’s Poliuto, Bizet’s Carmen, as well as Mozart, Britten, Handel and Ravel. www.glyndebourne.com

The crowning glory of classical music in Britain during the summer is the BBC Proms, which take place in the Victorian splendour of the Royal Albert Hall in London. For over two months orchestras and soloists from

The elegance of Glyndebourne – complemented by a picnic - an unmissable part of the summer season
around the globe perform nightly to classical music’s most appreciative audience.

www.bbc.co.uk/proms

What to wear

The summer season is a perfect opportunity to don your finest clothes and purchase an elegant hat – indeed, there are many events that still have traditional expectations of dress.

At Royal Ascot, in particular, hats must be worn, especially if you’re admitted to the Royal Enclosure. You can pick up a beautiful hat created by British milliners, the ideal souvenir of your trip that can be worn again and again. Gentlemen are expected to wear black or grey morning suits, including a waistcoat and top hat.

Henley Royal Regatta encourages the wearing of hats for ladies and of boaters, a formal summer straw hat, the perfect complement to gentlemen’s jackets and ties. Dressing for the polo is equally elegant; gentlemen tend to opt for white trousers and blazers while ladies should bring flat shoes to wear with their dresses - to ensure they can take part in the tradition of ‘treading in the divots’ (the grass kicked up by the horses during play).

Learn the art of etiquette

Debrett’s is the ultimate etiquette institution. Drawing upon 250 years of experience, they deliver bespoke coaching on topics from how to behave at the Polo to greeting British Royalty. Learn etiquette in a more relaxed atmosphere with a class hosted by HRH Princess Katarina, cousin of HRH the Prince of Wales, and Grant Harrold, a former royal butler. Inspired by the British social refinement of the Crawley family in TV series Downton Abbey, the classes take place during a traditional English afternoon tea at the Millennium Hotel in up-market central London area Mayfair.


Hats - how to wear, where to buy

Long associated with high society, hats are synonymous with the events of the British ‘season’, when age-old traditions come alive and Royals, Lords, Ladies and visitors dress up and watch an array of entertaining sports: horse-racing, motor-racing, tennis, cricket... and weddings.

From *Four Weddings and a Funeral* to the Royal Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in 2011, the world knows a true British mother-of-the-bride *must* have a talking-point hat, the assembled guests’ heads should be a sea of colour, straw, silk and feathers, and if you’re lucky, there will be some silk top hats bobbing about at the top of the aisle, their inhabitants anxiousy checking their watches and glancing towards the door for signs of the bride.

In large part thanks to the Royal Wedding - and the Duchess of Cambridge’s continued wearing of hats, wearing a work of art on your head has had quite the renaissance of late. If you want to get
your hands one, whether a showstopper or something subtle, read on to find out about marvellous British milliners, and where to get their wares.

**Stephen Jones.** Liverpool-born Jones is synonymous with hats. Thanks to his inventiveness, high level of expertise, and huge personality, he's hatted stars from Princess Diana to the Spice Girls, co-curated an exhibition on hats at the V&A museum, and provided the crowning touch to catwalk shows by the likes of Vivienne Westwood, Jean Paul Gaultier, Galliano, Marc Jacobs and more. He studied at famous Saint Martin’s school of Art (now Central St Martins), partied at the fashionably famous Blitz nightclub in Covent Garden in 1979, and lived with Boy George and Grayson Perry, each competing with each other to wear the most outrageous outfits.

His hat collections have had fabulous names over the decades, like ‘Murder by Millinery’, ‘Passport to Pleasure’ and ‘E=mc2’. You can buy hats, and now Stephen Jones fragrances too, from his Covent Garden and Dover St Market shops; prices begin at £250. Debenhams stocks ‘Top Hat by Stephen Jones’, which is a more affordable way to be hatted by the him, with prices ranging from £21-£120 [stephenjonesmillinery.com](http://stephenjonesmillinery.com)

**Robyn Coles Millinery.** Robyn Coles began her career not in hats, but as a buyer for high fashion brands, so was no stranger to the world of high fashion from the get-go. Armed with a diploma in Millinery from the London School of Fashion, Robyn decided to leave London and return to Cardiff in 2010 to set up her own business. In that short time she’s shown at London Fashion Week twice - most famously with hats on totally nude models of varying shapes and sizes. This year, she showed her SS13 collection at the Chelsea Flower Show, and hats had a distinct garden theme. Her boutique in Castle Arcade, Cardiff, is hat heaven. You can see Coles and her team working on the premises and commission a bespoke piece. Princess Eugenie is a fan. [robyncoles.com](http://robyncoles.com)

**Jane Corbett.** All eyes were on Carole Middleton when she emerged from her car on 29 April 2011 to see her daughter marry Prince William - which means all eyes saw her beautiful tilt-brim blue hat. It was made by Jane Corbett, a Berkshire-based milliner who trained under Rose Cory, milliner to the late Queen Mother. Since the wedding, Carole Middleton commended Jane to both her daughters, who have since been seen in Corbett creations; the Duchess wore one to the Buckingham Palace summer garden party earlier this year. Jane is busiest ahead of the summer ‘season’, and many of the hats seen at Ascot and Glorious Goodwood bear her name. Her hats cost between £350-500. [janecorbettmillinery.wordpress.com](http://janecorbettmillinery.wordpress.com)

**Philip Treacy.** One of the biggest names in hat design, Philip Treacy was responsible for more than 30 of the hats worn to the Royal Wedding, including the famous love-it-or-hate-it number worn by Princess Beatrice, and Victoria Beckham’s dark blue pillbox hat. He’s also the man behind many of Lady Gaga's most elaborate creations, including the telephone and lobster hats; Gaga even applied to do an internship with the designer, and opened his Michael Jackson-themed catwalk show last September. In an interview with *The Guardian* shortly after the Royal Wedding he said ‘I couldn't be more Irish but I celebrate Britishness through hats.’ When he met the Queen he asked her "Ma'am, do you enjoy wearing hats?" and said 'she stood back and said: "It is part of the uniform."' See his works of art at his London shop, located near Sloane Square. [philiptreacy.co.uk](http://philiptreacy.co.uk)
**William Chambers.** Milliner William Chambers cites Glasgow architecture among sources of inspiration, so you know you’re in for something a bit different. Add to that the fact that Scissor Sisters’ Ana Matronic, and flamboyant fashionista Anna Dello Russo have worn his creations, and you start to build a picture of his distinct style. He started hat-making in 2007 and got his break shortly after when pop star Roisin Murphy wore one of his hats on her European tour: press attention followed, a prestigious national creative award, and in 2009, his own studio and showroom in Glasgow. Fellow milliner Stephen Jones is a fan, and Chambers exhibited at Jones’s ‘Headonism’ showcase at London Fashion Week. Harrods, Fenwick and Fortnum and Mason’s in London stock William’s hats, while in Scotland you can find them in Harvey Nichols Edinburgh and by appointment at his Glasgow showroom. Headpieces start at £80 and hats at £150. williamchambers.co.uk

**Lock & Co.** The oldest hat shop in the world is Lock & Co. Ltd., and it’s also one of the oldest family businesses still going. Established in 1676, Lock & Co. now boasts Royal Warrants for the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales, and while the company does make hats for ladies, this is a place for gents to go if they want headwear. If you do so, you’ll be following in the footsteps of Sir Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin and Admiral Lord Nelson. Be it a riding hat, a boater, a trilby or a top hat, you’ll be fitted into it at Lock’s and come out walking a few inches taller! lockhatters.co.uk