

London's most

LITERARY
AFTERNOON
TEA

LONDON
2026

CAFÉ ROYAL GRILL

ESTD. 1865

I adore simple pleasures.
They are the last refuge
of the complex.

— OSCAR WILDE —

A Novel Tea



PRICE PER PERSON

Traditional Afternoon Tea — £85

with a glass of Laurent-Perrier La Cuvée, Brut — £95

with a glass of Laurent-Perrier Cuvée Rosé, Brut — £105

with a glass of Grand Siècle Iteration N°26, Brut — £135

For more than 160 years, Café Royal has been a favourite haunt of London's literary set, where poets and playwrights gathered to exchange ideas over tea, cocktails and dinner. Oscar Wilde was among its most celebrated raconteurs, Virginia Woolf a frequent visitor with a novelist's eye for her fellow diners, while John le Carré would meet up with the Detection Club, whose meetings were long held here.

Now their literary worlds take a delicious turn. Drawing on their characters, this afternoon tea transforms the ritual into a tale of Wildean decadence, Woolfian elegance and le Carré's shadowy world of espionage. Consider it a novel idea with every course worth reading into, served one delicious chapter at a time.

Savouries

CURED HAM, TRUFFLE MASCARPONE & MARINATED FIG

*Inspired by Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,
and its themes of luxury, sensuality and decadence*

Aged Cured Ham, Truffle Mascarpone,
Marinated Fig, Toasted Brioche



CORONATION CHICKEN

*Inspired by Rudyard Kipling's Anglo-Indian adventures
which shaped his stories*

Roasted Suffolk Chicken, Golden Raisins, Aromatic Curry
Mayonnaise, Gem Lettuce, Fragrant Bread



CURED SMOKED SALMON

*Inspired by W.B. Yeats and his enduring connection
to Ireland's landscapes and traditions*

Cured Smoked Salmon, Horseradish Crème Fraîche,
Wild Rocket, Rye Sourdough

ENGLISH CUCUMBER & ELDERFLOWER

*Inspired by Oscar Wilde, who immortalised the humble
cucumber sandwich in *The Importance of Being Earnest**

English Cucumber, Elderflower-Pickled Shallots,
Cultured Cream Cheese, Soft White Bread



CACKLEBEAN EGG MAYONNAISE

*Inspired by vegetarian George Bernard Shaw's belief
that exceptional ingredients speak for themselves*

Cacklebean Free-Range Egg Mayonnaise,
Mustard Cress, Soft White Bread



A desk is a dangerous place
from which to watch the world.

— JOHN LE CARRÉ —

Scones

THE BLOOMSBURY SCONE

Victorian Raisin Classic Scone
Traditional Strawberry Preserve & Seasonal Fig Jam

The humble scone has its own place in literary tradition. Freshly baked, it evokes the country-house rituals of afternoon tea, where hospitality, conversation and etiquette were central to society. Strawberry evokes the romance of the English garden, while fig offers a nod to the mythology of the classical world that inspired writers from Chaucer to Shakespeare and beyond.



TEA TIP

JING Phoenix Honey Orchid

Richly floral and aromatic, Phoenix Honey Orchid brings the literary journey from page to table, its lush notes of peach and dessert wine complementing the richness of each course while its bright character cleanses the palate between chapters.

JING Darjeeling Empyrean

With grape sweetness, notes of toasted hay and hops and hints of muscatel, this light and highly fragrant black tea brings the literary journey from page to table, its uplifting character cleansing the palate between each savoury chapter.



Sweets

DORIAN'S GILDED MIRROR

Inspired by Wilde's tale of eternal beauty, decadence and hidden truths, this mirror is crafted with a lustrous plum glaze, delicately finished with shimmering gold chocolate. Beneath its captivating surface lies a darker, indulgent heart of honey mousse, plum compote and delicate almond sponge.



MRS DALLOWAY'S HAT

A flower-adorned hat brings Virginia Woolf's elegant London to life, inspired by Clarissa Dalloway's flower-buying morning in the hours before her party. Fresh blooms give way to hazelnut mousse, orange marmalade and praline.



THE SECRET LETTER

A wax-sealed letter in patisserie form channels the intrigue of le Carré's espionage novels, nodding to both George Smiley's world of tradecraft and Café Royal's long association with the Detection Club. Break the seal to reveal layers of Earl Grey tea mousse, Pink Lady apple compote, cheesecake sablé and buttery streusel.



THE CAFÉ ROYAL LIBRARY

Three edible books bring Wilde, Woolf and le Carré together, their very different worlds united in a final chapter of dark chocolate mousse, vanilla salted caramel, vanilla crèmeux and crisp sponge.

One cannot think well,
love well, sleep well, if one
has not dined well.

— VIRGINIA WOOLF —