

FLUID★LONDON



Al Fresco: Top 10 Restaurants & Pubs for Outside Dining

Ahh yes, the British summer, it's always a hot topic of conversation across the country. Despite the sun's unpredictability and the weatherman's knack of always getting the forecast wrong, we still love to embrace the summer months as best we can. So, now the highly anticipated season is upon us, we felt it only right to pull together a list of the finest al fresco dining spots in London.

With the help of our Top Ten, you can grab your sun hat and know exactly where to run to when the sun does actually come out to play.

1  **Old Ship (Bar)**
25 Upper Mall, Riverside, Hammersmith, London, W8 9TD
Cuisine: Pub

The Old Ship is one of my most beloved locations in which to kick back in the fresh air and settle down for a night of top notch food and drink. Located right on the River Thames, it's the perfect venue for watching the world (and of course the rowers) float on by. It offers fantastic waterside seating and, should the rain clouds make their ever predictable appearance, a covered area is also available. The Old Ship is great for breakfast on warm mornings and excellent for BBQs on balmy evenings.

2  **Covent Garden Kitchen (Restaurant)**
Unit 6A The Market, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 8RA
Cuisine: Eclectic

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Covent Garden is all about the atmosphere, from the fun street performers to the hustle and bustle of the market. When eating in the West End, choosing a restaurant slap bang in the middle of the fun therefore makes the most sense to me. That's why I choose Covent Garden Kitchen, located right in the throng of the excitement. I get great food, front row seats for the piazza performances, a fantastic view of the market and, most importantly in London, umbrellas and heaters if it's wet and cold.

3  **The Terrace (Restaurant / Hotel)**
The Langham Hotel, 1C Portland Place, Oxford Circus, London, W1B 1JA
Cuisine: Moroccan

For a quintessentially English summer evening, I like to head to The Terrace at the Langham - the latest in a long line of seasonal pop up bars. Everything about this place screams England, from the Champagne and Pimms to the topiary trees and plants, although sadly there are no cucumber sandwiches to be found. Instead, they offer a range of platters, which are perfect to share with friends in the sunshine. And let's face it, if there's anything us Brits can do best, it's sharing.

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4  **The Old Brewery Cafe & Restaurant (Restaurant)**
The Pepys Building, The Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London, SE10 9LW
Cuisine: Eclectic

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Boasting 60 guest beers and even beer inspired dishes, the Old Brewery is an ale lover's paradise. Not being a beer drinker myself, I feel somewhat of a hypocrite voting The Old Brewery in my top 10, but this place has so much more to offer. As well as a brewery, the venue is home to a lovely restaurant, cafe and bar and is magnificently located at the beautiful Old Naval College. Nestled on the banks of the River Thames, it is the ideal spot for alfresco dining and general relaxation.

5  **Courtyard at 51 (Bar / Restaurant)**
51 Buckingham Gate, St James, London, SW1E 6AF
Cuisine: Lebanese

Seclusion, class, tranquility...and a big, posh BBQ. Just the night I desire in central London but seldom find. That's why I rejoiced when I came across the Courtyard at 51 Buckingham Gate. It's all those things and more. Offering a BBQ every man is jealous of, a range of themed menus and a beautiful Victorian fountain, this swanky venue is ideal for a spot of peaceful, al fresco schmoozing. Plus, there's rumours that they intend on staging opera nights there too.

6  **Boundary (Restaurant)**
2-4 Boundary Street, Shoreditch, London, E2 7JE
Cuisine: British

This once Victorian warehouse has been transformed into a building that despite the name seems to know no boundaries. The fabulous venue, a project by Terence Conran, wouldn't look out of place in any exclusive world city. It houses three restaurants, a hotel, bakery and shop but the star on the Boundary tree is the rooftop grill. With a garden, open fireplace and 360° views of London, this is one of the capital's most romantic dining spots. If a chill kicks in, Welsh blankets are even on offer.

7  **Babylon at The Roof Gardens (Restaurant)**
99 Kensington High Street, Kensington, London, W8 5SA
Cuisine: Modern British

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Despite being ever the sceptic, even I was blown away by Babylon at the Roof Gardens. Richard Branson has done us proud. The food, the venue, the views; it's all extremely impressive. Dining indoors is one thing but tucking into some designer food in Babylon's lush gardens is quite another. It's a truly beautiful restaurant with an exquisite menu and is an al fresco experience I happily din

8  **The Hare & Hounds (Bar)**
216 Upper Richmond Road West, East Sheen, London, SW14 8AH
Cuisine: Gastro

For an al fresco family venue, the Hare and Hounds has got to be the top of the list. The children can play with toys in the large 300-seat garden; the adults can relax at the benches and while away the hours over their preferred tittle. The menus also suit everyone with a selection of hearty and delicious pub classics - the spicy crispy squid being a personal favourite. Located in affluent East Sheen, the Hare and Hounds is British suburbia at its best.

9  **The Troubadour (Bar / Restaurant)**
263-7 Old Brompton Road, Earls Court, London, SW5 6JA
Cuisine: European

No need for a flux capacitor here; I just have to walk through the doors of the Troubadour to enter the 1950s. Offering true vintage in a chic form, this cafe-cum-wine-bar-cum-music-venue is an experience I savour. The Troubadour's charm oozes into the outside world too. Elegant tables are perfectly placed to soak up the atmosphere of Old Brompton Street. There is also an idyllic garden - possibly my most peaceful part of central London and an ideal spot to tuck into the best omelettes around.

10  **Imbibe (Bar)**
173 Bladfrisks Road, Southwark, London, SE1 8ER
Cuisine: Mediterranean