
HISTORIC HOTELS of AMERICA

National Trust *for* Historic Preservation®

The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Afternoon Tea Experiences List Is Announced

February 8, 2023 ---- Washington, DC ---- Historic Hotels of America®, the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing and celebrating the finest Historic Hotels, is pleased to announce The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Afternoon Tea Experiences List. Hotels inducted into Historic Hotels of America offer heritage travelers a chance to immerse themselves in a Victorian tradition being preserved and revived across the United States: afternoon tea. The tradition of afternoon tea symbolizes hospitality, tradition, warmth, sustenance, and comfort. Afternoon tea is both a social gathering and a moment to pause and reflect on the day. While the custom of tea ceremonies dates back millennia around the world, first in China, the tradition of *afternoon tea*—a meal served mid-afternoon with a tea or sparkling wine—is traced to the English aristocrat Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford and Queen Victoria’s Lady of the Bedchamber. Her household served dinner fashionably late, at 8 p.m., but the duchess did not want to wait so long between luncheon and supper. Being regularly hungry at 3 or 4 p.m., she instituted a new meal. The Duchess of Bedford became a trendsetter when her “afternoon tea” was quickly adopted by women of means during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, a time when social and cultural mores were rapidly changing for many women. The pursuit of activities away from one’s home became socially acceptable, even fashionable. The movement for women’s suffrage in Britain and the United States grew over sandwiches and tea at tearooms or friends’ homes, and tea filled the void for Americans wanting to socialize over a drink during Prohibition. The 25 hotels selected offer visitors opportunities to discover the history of tea, indulge in afternoon tea, and experience its romance within meticulously restored and preserved historic settings.

Download a selection of afternoon tea recipes, submitted by the historic hotels featured on this list. View this press release with accompanying photos at HistoricHotels.org.

[The Omni Homestead Resort](#) (1766) Hot Springs, Virginia

Nestled within the scenic Allegheny Mountains, The Omni Homestead Resort has welcomed guests to Hot Springs, Virginia, for over 250 years and has served afternoon tea for over a century. A charter member of Historic Hotels of America since 1989 and a U.S. National Historic Landmark, the resort is set on 2,300-acres distinguished by natural hot springs and a

splendid four-season climate. Afternoon tea was first served in the Garden Room during the 1920s, then in the Great Hall until the 1990s. In the 20th century, tea was served to each person on a silver platter with delicate finger sandwiches, petit fours, and the resort's own blend of hot tea. The tea service was provided on the hotel's own monogrammed fine china. Engraved silver hot water teapots and flatware were also used during afternoon tea. The hotel even offered etiquette classes for younger guests, so they would be prepared to participate in formal afternoon teas as young adults. Today, afternoon tea is served in the Main Dining Room on Friday and Saturday from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. A selection of classic, spicy, and fruity Harney & Sons teas are served alongside a three-tier service of savories, scones, and sweets – with the option to add a glass of sparkling wine with strawberries. Reservations for afternoon tea and dinner are recommended, and a dress code is encouraged. *Featured Recipe: The Omni Homestead Resort's Blueberry Scones*

[The Willard InterContinental Washington, D.C. \(1818\) Washington, D.C.](#)

The Willard InterContinental, Washington DC has been at the center of Washington's social and political life for over two centuries since opening in 1818. The hotel is situated just blocks from the White House and other important Federal buildings, making it a perfect spot for the social elite and Washington powerbrokers to meet to discuss national and global concerns over cocktails at the hotel's historic Round Robin Bar or over formal tea in one of its lounges. Inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2010 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, The Willard InterContinental has served afternoon tea since the 1920s. Tea at The Willard InterContinental, Washington DC is one of the hotel's most cherished traditions. Although afternoon tea is offered throughout the year, The Willard InterContinental features two specialty tea services: one during the Cherry Blossom season in the spring and an immensely popular holiday-inspired afternoon tea in December. Originally served in the upstairs Tea Room overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue—now known as The Nest event space—the hotel's afternoon tea is now served among the grandeur of The Willard InterContinental's Peacock Alley. Along with the elegant sounds of the harp, guests enjoy a broad selection of the finest estate and boutique blended loose-leaf teas by the Jenwey Tea Company, savory finger sandwiches, decadent pastries, and freshly baked scones. To make the afternoon tea even more special, guests can add a glass of Moët & Chandon Champagne or specialty sparkling wines.

[Antrim 1844 \(1844\) Taneytown, Maryland](#)

Inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2007 and listed in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, Antrim 1844 was a family farm for over 100 years before being transformed into a boutique luxury hotel. Its tradition of serving afternoon tea began in 1991. The tea service was originally delivered to the guestrooms in the mansion, but, as the hotel expanded, afternoon tea moved to the South Drawing Room. Today it is served at the Veranda daily between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. At Antrim 1844's afternoon tea, classical piano music sets the tone in the background. The white porcelain tea set is unique to the hotel and features "Antrim" monogrammed in gold

letters, personalized at the property with an on-site kiln. On the menu are house-made savory toasts (smoked duck with orange marmalade, bacon jam with Swiss cheese, and English cucumber with lemon cream cheese, to name a few flavors) and bite-size quiches. Sweets are house-made and sourced from a local bakery. During tea, the Veranda offers guests a perfect view of the rose garden, which was featured in the [2022 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Most Magnificent Gardens](#). In the winter, fireplaces make teatime warm and cozy. The Veranda is just steps away from the twin drawing rooms, gift shop, and Pickwick Pub. In the warmer months, afternoon tea can be enjoyed before taking a stroll through the brick courtyard and blossoming rose garden.

The Sayre Mansion (1858) Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

A Gothic Revival-style mansion in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, The Sayre Mansion is framed by the swaying branches of century-old trees and the picturesque beauty of the Lehigh Valley's lush landscape. It was the first house built in the upscale area of Fountain Hill, in 1858, and has been meticulously restored to maintain its historic details. Afternoon tea became fashionable soon after Robert Sayre moved into his new home. The hotel's General Manager, Sarah Trimmer, says the mansion's Victorian look and feel makes afternoon tea here a unique experience. The hotel hosts an intimate, traditional English tea every Thursday from 2 to 4 p.m. Guests are seated in the formal dining room or elegant parlor, amid the elegant surroundings of the 1858 mansion. The menu boasts the delicate finger sandwiches, scones, and decadent desserts that are customary for afternoon tea. Guests may also delight in a variety of tea scones accompanied by Devonshire cream and preserves. In addition to freshly brewed tea or unsweetened iced tea, each guest is also served a flute of sparkling wine to toast the occasion. During the year, afternoon tea takes on holiday themes for St. Patrick's Day and Mother's Day. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania is known as the "Christmas City," and The Sayre Mansion serves a festive Christmas Tea in December. The hotel also co-hosts afternoon teas to benefit non-profit organizations, including an "Equali-Tea" held in June during Pride Month to assist Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, and a Breast Cancer Awareness Tea in October during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Reservations are required for any teatime.

Mohonk Mountain House (1869) New Paltz, New York

In 1869, the rocky cliffs that rise above a crystal blue, glacial lake in the Hudson River Valley inspired Albert Smiley to create Mohonk Mountain House. This would become a resort where guests could renew their body, minds, and spirits in a beautiful natural setting. Mohonk Mountain House was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1986, inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1991, and continues to delight travelers with uncommon experiences in the 21st century. For many years, the tearoom was part of what is now the Winter Lounge. Victorian guests would enjoy hot tea, cakes, and cookies, in various seating areas inside and on the porches. While afternoon tea was offered to all visitors, specially selected guests would receive invitations to tea with Mrs. Smiley in the private Smiley

Family Parlor. Mrs. Smiley's original wicker tea cart and tea set remain part of the Mohonk Mountain House collection, as a tribute to the vibrant social atmosphere she cultivated. Today, Mohonk Mountain House serves afternoon tea in the Lake Lounge, where the tea counter was constructed of wood from the original 1899 bellmen's bench. At the Lake Lounge, afternoon tea is enjoyed with beautiful, sweeping views of Mohonk Lake and the cliffside. Dainty bites, including three different house-made tea cookies, are offered during afternoon tea, and a variety of tea blends are available. The hotel commissioned its own black tea blend in the 1970s, a combination of classic Orange Pekoe and cut Black Tea. It is available to purchase from the resort gift shop along with other herbal and flavored teas, as well as coffee. New flavors and offerings, such as live music, are added to the tea service during special events throughout the year, such as Scottish Weekend in January, the Garden Holiday in the spring, and festive December holidays.

Palace Hotel (1875) San Francisco, California

For over 100 years, the Palace Hotel has been a San Francisco landmark with timeless artistry, which can be seen in venues such as The Garden Court, with its glass ceiling and Austrian crystal chandeliers, and in artistic displays like the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* mural by Maxfield Parrish I. Since the hotel's construction, visitors have basked in the architectural splendor while enjoying tea served in The Garden Court. Today, afternoon tea is served every Saturday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Between Thanksgiving and the New Year's holidays, service days and hours are increased so that even more guests can enjoy afternoon tea during the holiday season. The contemporary furnishings complement the hotel's historic architecture, making it a gorgeous setting to enjoy tea. Silver and fine china are used for a modern, elegant service, and a harpist provides live music. The Palace serves several blends of TEALEAVES tea including black, green, herbal and the hotel's own custom Legacy Blend. The Signature Tea service includes elegant tea sandwiches, mini pastries, scones, clotted cream, lemon curd, and jam. Upgrades are available, including the Champagne Tea service and Caviar Tea service. For children, the hotel offers Prince & Princess tea service with specialty sweets and savories, as well as a jeweled crown and candy scepter. The Palace sells tins of their custom Legacy Tea blend. The Palace Hotel serves holiday-themed teas in The Garden Court for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and throughout December. [*Featured Recipe: The Palace Hotel's Buttermilk Scones*](#)

Grand Hotel (1886) Mackinac Island, Michigan

Overlooking Lake Michigan, Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan, is one of the last surviving Grand Dames of the Gilded Age. It was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2001 and was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1989. The Grand Hotel has served a refined afternoon tea since opening in 1887. Early guests at Grand Hotel would stay for months at a time, traveling by railroad and steamships from cities like Chicago and Detroit. Afternoon tea created an additional event for guests to attend, an opportunity to socialize and snack before the formal dinner service. Today, afternoon tea is held

in The Parlor, which was designed by Dorothy Draper Co., daily from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. As they were also served a century ago, guests are served a selection of assorted tea sandwiches, biscuits, scones, jams, and clotted cream with hot tea and a spot of sherry or Champagne. From The Parlor, guests can look out through a wall of windows onto The Front Porch—the longest porch in the world, at 660 feet in length—to enjoy a view of the Straits of Mackinac. The resort features themed afternoon tea experiences during package weekends, including Mother’s Day, and a Spooktacular Afternoon Tea during Halloween at Grand. In The Parlor, decorated with cobwebs and pumpkins, the Spooktacular Afternoon Tea serves "finger" sandwiches shaped like human fingers, pastries decorated to look like spiders and ghosts, and “spooky” music is played live by the harpist.

The Pfister Hotel (1893) Milwaukee, Wisconsin

When The Pfister Hotel opened its doors in 1893, the Milwaukee, Wisconsin hotel was called “The Grand Hotel of the West.” Architect Charles Koch’s Romanesque Revival-style design incorporated innovative construction and an in-house electrical power plant, which made The Pfister Hotel the first hotel in the country with individual thermostats in each guestroom. Afternoon tea was served in the Lobby Lounge when it was first considered to be fashionable. Nearly 100 years later, in 1983, afternoon tea was revived and refreshed under General Manager Rosemary Steinfest, who introduced Afternoon Victorian Tea. The tea service was originally held in the lobby bar, but was eventually moved to Blu, the hotel’s modern lounge on the 23rd floor. The high-rise venue means guests enjoy their teatime with incredible views of Downtown Milwaukee and Lake Michigan. The Pfister Hotel serves Rishi Tea, which is headquartered in Milwaukee. Each afternoon tea service is led by a Pfister Tea Butler, whose role is to speak about the varieties of tea, their origins, effects on the body, and pairing suggestions. The Tea Butlers use an all-silver service, including a replica of an 18th-century self-tipping teapot. The afternoon tea menu features fresh scones, sandwiches, and pastries. Guests can enhance their experience with sparkling wines. After the experience, guests can purchase teas, as well as house-made scones, in the hotel’s gift shop. The Pfister Hotel offers private teatimes for baby showers, wedding showers, children’s birthdays, manners classes, and more. [*Featured Recipes: The Pfister Hotel’s Caprese Tart and Whipped Ricotta*](#)

The Jefferson Hotel (1895) Richmond, Virginia

Thousands of visitors flocked to The Jefferson Hotel when it opened its doors in 1895. By the end of the decade, The Jefferson Hotel affectionately bore the moniker of “The Belle of the ‘90s.” Naturally, a Belle of the Victorian era served afternoon tea. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and a charter member of Historic Hotels of America when it was inducted in 1989, the hotel is particularly famous for hosting Richmond residents’ pet alligators in its Palm Court lobby from the early 1900s through 1948. This made teatime in the ladies’ parlor, located right off the lobby, potentially exciting. The hotel tells a story about a guest who, while relaxing over tea and a glass (or two) of sherry, mistook a wandering alligator for a foot stool. Legend

states that she never partook in anything stronger than tea again! The modern tradition of afternoon tea service at The Jefferson Hotel began in the early 1990s. Tea is served on the Mezzanine balcony overlooking the Rotunda lobby on Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., January through November. Tea is served daily in December. The hotel serves a Southern afternoon tea, featuring a savory country ham sandwich—along with traditional scones and Devonshire cream, pastries, as well as options for gluten, dairy, and nut-free tiers—and a variety of teas from Richmond’s own Rostov’s Coffee & Tea. The most popular selections by far are The Jefferson Blend and The Richmond Blend. The Jefferson Blend is an aromatic, traditional English blend created for the hotel. The Richmond blend is a spicy blend of black tea, cinnamon oil, orange peel, and cloves, taken from a Colonial Williamsburg recipe. Both blends are available for purchase in the gift shop, Gators. Every first and third Saturday of each month, the hotel hosts a Chocolate Lovers’ Tea, which includes the normal menu along with a decadent selection of chocolate confections. In December, there are two Santa Teas designed for children.

[Featured Recipe: The Jefferson Hotel’s Scones](#)

[Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa \(1901\) Honolulu, Hawaii](#)

Known as the “First Lady of Waikiki,” The Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa is a beautiful Beaux-Arts-style resort—with its gleaming white façade, grand columns, and a distinctive porte-cochère—that first opened its legendary doors on March 11, 1901. A charter member of Historic Hotels of America since 1989, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel's guests have indulged in afternoon tea on a shaded beachfront veranda for over a century. Guests from near and far found the perfect respite from the afternoon sun in the comfort of the hotel’s cozy lounge chairs, cooled by Hawaii’s gentle ocean breezes. They sipped tea, refreshing their mind, body, and spirit, as they observed beach-goers on Waikiki beach or immersed in conversation with friends and family, while hosts presented freshly brewed pots of teas along with light repasts of savories and pastries. Today, the Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa continues this elegant tradition with its signature afternoon tea service, a variety of fine teas accompanied by an assortment of delectable signature items. Guests can choose from a variety of Moana Classic Teas, including Hawaiian Coconut, Sweet Peach, Passion Orange Guava, and Mango Pineapple; or traditional teas, such as Classic Earl Grey, Emerald Jasmine Pearls, Indian Darjeeling, or Traditional Herbal Rooibos. Guests can pair their tea with savory and sweet selections, such as the Curry Chicken Salad Croissant or Orange Blueberry Scones. Gluten-free and vegan options are available. There are special occasion teas for Mother’s Day and Halloween, as well as Christmas.

[West Baden Springs Hotel \(1902\) West Baden Springs, Indiana](#)

Underneath the stunning dome of the West Baden Springs Hotel in West Baden Springs, Indiana, afternoon tea is a contemporary tradition inspired by the Gilded Age fashions of the hotel’s heyday. For nearly thirty years after it opened in 1902, when it was revered as the “Eighth Wonder of the World,” West Baden Springs Hotel—designated a National Historic Landmark by

the U.S. Secretary of the Interior—was a prime Midwestern luxury destination until the Great Depression. Decades later, the tradition of afternoon tea was born during the enormous restoration project that returned the hotel to its original grandeur. During the restoration, from 2000 to 2006, Indiana Landmarks offered tours and a traditional afternoon tea on the sixth floor of the hotel. When the hotel was fully renovated and reopened to guests in 2007, afternoon tea became a favorite way to “drink in” the hotel’s luxury and ambiance. Today, afternoon tea in the hotel’s atrium satisfies all the senses. While admiring the expanse of the six-story domed atrium, guests are treated to the heavenly sounds of live harp music and choose from a tempting menu of teas—everything from traditional Earl Grey to fruity options and varieties with spice. Tea may be the star of the show, though house-made cucumber sandwiches, scones, tarts, and canapés deliver so many sweet and savory surprises. Traditional afternoon tea is held every Saturday. Occasionally, the hotel offers Mommy & Me Tea and an Afternoon Tea & Tour, combining tea service and a historic hotel tour. Children are welcome at regular afternoon tea as well. To bring the experience home, tea pots and tea sets are available for purchase at the hotel mercantile.

[The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco](#) (1907) San Francisco, California

The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco dates to the early 1900s, when two sisters—Theresa Fair Oelrichs and Virginia Fair Vanderbilt—decided to build a spectacular boutique hotel in the heart of San Francisco’s Nob Hill. When the hotel opened in 1907, afternoon tea was offered in the historic Laurel Court with polished silver, fine china, and accouterments. Today, the lobby-level Laurel Court Restaurant & Bar continues to dazzle guests with its soaring domed ceilings, commanding columns, Tuscan-style frescoes, and ornate detailing. Seated among the grandeur of Laurel Court, guests enjoy a broad selection of blended loose-leaf teas, savory finger sandwiches, decadent pastries, and the hotel’s famous freshly baked scones. Fairmont Hotels has its own brand of tea, LOT 35, that is served at its hotels. Fairmont Teas may be purchased online at The Fairmont Store. Bubbly and specialty cocktails are also available at afternoon tea at The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco. Afternoon tea is served on Saturdays year-round. Special themed offers occur several times throughout the year, for occasions like Thanksgiving and the December holidays, and Mother’s Day. During December, a private tea can be booked for a single party of up to eight guests within the hotel’s [magnificent Gingerbread House](#).

[The Plaza](#) (1907) New York, New York

For over 100 years, The Palm Court at The Plaza has been an iconic destination for afternoon tea in New York City. Inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1991 and designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, The Plaza Hotel has served afternoon tea since it opened in 1907. The Palm Court was a beloved destination for writers F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald—so much so that F. Scott even made it a setting in his novel, *The Great Gatsby*. Its interior design is inspired by nearby Central Park: lush greenery, with potted plants, ceiling-high palm trees, trellis detailing, and custom furnishings with cane accents under the soaring stained-glass dome. Today, afternoon tea is served daily from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Each tea offers sandwiches, scones, pastries, and more. A glass of sparkling wine can also be added. The fine china is custom Bernardaud French porcelain, and the whimsical tea pots are designed by American designer Jonathan Adler. The Palm Court offers themed afternoon teas throughout the year, including a “Spooky *Eloise*” experience near Halloween that includes a candy scavenger hunt around the lobby. The Palm Court serves a selection of teas by the Palais des Thés tea company. The hotel recommends the crowd favorite, “The du Hammam,” a light green tea with notes of orange blossoms, roses, and red berries. Palais des Thés teas are available for purchase in The Plaza Boutique, as well as the featured fine china and *Eloise*-themed goodies.

The Ashton Hotel (1915) Fort Worth, Texas

When it opened in 1915, the six-story Italianate-style building now known as The Ashton Hotel was the home of the Fort Worth Club, a hub of Fort Worth, Texas business deals and civic ties. Today, The Ashton Hotel, which is the city's only small luxury hotel, prides itself on catering to guests and locals in a grand way: by offering afternoon tea. While there may have been an earlier afternoon tea service in the past, the afternoon tea experience as it is known today began in 2004. It is served every Saturday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the hotel's Six Ten Grill. The hotel describes its afternoon tea aesthetic as traditional, serving drinks and snacks on fine bone china, with crystal sugar bowls, on linen tablecloths. Light instrumental jazz music plays during regular afternoon tea service at The Ashton Hotel. Teas served include classic green, black, oolong and white teas, with herbal and decaffeinated teas available by special request. Two specialty flavors that the hotel recommends are vanilla rose and coconut assam. Each three-tier tower of small bites is created for guests based on their requests at the time of their reservation. The menu and the décor change throughout the year to match the flavors and aesthetics of the seasons. A special holiday menu is offered between Thanksgiving and early January, featuring pear and almond tarts, butternut bisque, and lavender and pineapple scones. The holiday menu is served with a festive Champagne flute. The hotel also offers private teas for special occasions, as well as a Teddy Bear Tea for children 10 and under.

Hotel Boulderado (1909) Boulder, Colorado

Opening in 1909 as Boulder, Colorado's first luxury hotel, Hotel Boulderado debuted its contemporary afternoon tea experiences in the 1990s. The annual Holiday Afternoon Tea is the longest-running experience and is available in November and December. During the holiday season, on tables set along the mezzanine in the historic wing, guests enjoy afternoon tea under the beautiful stained-glass canopy ceiling as they look over the grand 28-foot-tall white fir tree from northern New Mexico. Sparkling lights and verdant garland line the original cherrywood railing of the mezzanine, and golden light streams through the beautiful stained-glass canopy ceiling. Each table is decorated with an assortment of traditional holiday décor, from nutcrackers to beautiful floating candles. Depending on the day that they reserve their table, guests may enjoy a holiday music playlist, live piano music from local musicians, or a holiday choir. Hotel

Boulderado serves a selection of teas from The Tea Spot including herbal teas like the popular Strawberry Fields or Egyptian Chamomile, black teas like the classic English Breakfast and Earl Grey, plus green teas like the Boulder Blues or Organic Sencha blends. During the special holiday teas, guests are served a small bite tower featuring a selection of tea sandwiches, pastries, and sweet bites. There are upgrades available, including specialty holiday cocktails and wines. Occasionally, during other seasons, the hotel has offered romantic afternoon tea for Valentine's Day, a springtime Fairy, Tulip & Elf Tea, and a Halloween-themed Witch's Brew Tea. Inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1996, Hotel Boulderado continues to charm all who step inside.

The Saint Paul Hotel (1910) St. Paul, Minnesota

Located in the heart of St. Paul, Minnesota's business and cultural districts, The Saint Paul Hotel offers guests a respite in its tranquil English garden setting. When the Italian Renaissance Revival-style hotel opened in 1910, it quickly became the city's social hub. The Saint Paul Hotel served tea in the Palm Room during its early years. Today, tea is served in the lobby on Saturdays and Sundays at 1 p.m., with live piano music playing. During the holiday season, festive afternoon tea is served Wednesday through Sunday. The hotel serves a special tea blend custom-made for its tea service, a black currant tea. Visitors may purchase a bag of the custom tea upon request. The Saint Paul Hotel invites tea party enthusiasts to attend two special afternoon tea events occasionally offered at the hotel: "Simply Charming Tea" and "How to Host an Afternoon Tea." Julie Frantz, an etiquette consultant for The Saint Paul Hotel, leads these events. In the "Simply Charming" experience, Frantz talks to afternoon tea patrons about the qualities of a "charming lady." Topics such as kindness, gratitude, humor, vitality, and mystique will be covered while they enjoy their tea service. Frantz's "How to Host" experience provides a tutorial for patrons interested in the traditions of afternoon tea. Frantz also goes over the health benefits and history of tea, how to plan an afternoon tea menu, setting up your home for tea, and the rules of etiquette while enjoying that delightful cup.

The Hermitage Hotel (1910) Nashville, Tennessee

Being famous for its role in the passage of the 19th Amendment, it should come as no surprise that afternoon tea—a tradition strongly associated with female socialization—is celebrated at The Hermitage Hotel. This Nashville, Tennessee landmark was an instant success when it opened in 1910 and became *the* place for the city's fashionable society to meet. In its early years, hotel management made it a specific goal to attract the women of Nashville. In 1911, the hotel announced that women's social gatherings, non-profits, and good works were welcome at the hotel. In 1915, hotel management provided a rent-free office to the Nashville Equal Suffrage League. During the scorching summer of 1920, The Hermitage Hotel, located across the street from the State Capitol, was the epicenter of an embattled mix of pro- and anti-suffragists, and legislators and lobbyists, in the weeks leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Tea was enjoyed by the women of the league while entertaining influential legislators and

campaigning for the right to vote. The pivotal decision granting women the right to vote nationwide came down to Tennessee delivering the 36th and final state vote needed for victory. The complexity of the political moment is captured during teatime at The Hermitage Hotel, too: in August 1920, a large tea event was organized by the anti-suffrage campaigners, who rented the mezzanine level. The anti-ratification forces wearing red roses, squaring off against yellow-rose-wearing pro-suffrage campaigners in 1920, the suffrage struggle at The Hermitage Hotel came to be known as “The War of the Roses.” In recent years, The Hermitage Hotel hosts The Yellow Rose Tea in August in honor of the Women’s Suffrage Movement. During The Yellow Rose Tea, visitors enjoy a collection of tea sandwiches, scones, and pastries while learning about the events that transpired inside The Hermitage Hotel leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The Hermitage Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1996 and was designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Throughout the year, the hotel offers a variety of afternoon tea experiences, including “Spillin’ Tea with Draper James,” inspired by recipes from actress and producer Reese Witherspoon’s cookbook, *Whiskey in a Teacup*. This experience is offered Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. in 2023. Reservations are required.

Fairmont Copley Plaza (1912) Boston, Massachusetts

In a city famous for its revolutionary “Tea Party,” Boston, Massachusetts’ Fairmont Copley Plaza offered afternoon tea for many years in the hotel’s famed Tea Court. Unlike the tea party in Boston Harbor, however, tea at Fairmont Copley Plaza was a refined and elegant event for society Bostonians since the hotel was founded in 1912. During the 1930s, the hotel’s Oval Ballroom was the site of popular tea dances, held in the late afternoon before dinner. In the 21st century, the Fairmont Copley Plaza no longer serves afternoon tea, but it has great plans for tea in 2023. This year is the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, a momentous event during American colonists’ struggles for independence from Great Britain. In May 1773, the Parliament of Great Britain passed the Tea Act, which forced colonists to pay taxes that they felt were unjust if they wanted to purchase tea. In December of that year, a group of anti-imperialist colonials disguised themselves as Mohawk warriors and raided three tea-transporting ships. They dumped 90 pounds of tea into the harbor, an amount worth over \$1,700,000 in today’s dollars. Other raids on tea imports followed, but the Boston Tea Party remains iconic. To commemorate the Boston Tea Party anniversary and the hotel’s own tea traditions, this year Fairmont Copley Plaza is offering guests the opportunity to discover the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum with a special Fairmont rate for two adults, plus a tea-themed welcome amenity that includes a cocktail and dessert. The hotel is offering a “Griffin’s Wharf” cocktail, named after the place where the Boston Tea Party occurred, which features Bombay Sapphire gin, Italicus bergamot liqueur, green tea, and honey. Dessert—a white chocolate semifreddo with earl grey sugar and hazelnut praline—is served in a teacup.

HOTEL DU PONT (1913) Wilmington, Delaware

For 110 years, HOTEL DU PONT in Wilmington, Delaware and its historic venues have hosted all types of social gatherings, both intimate and magnificent. Since 1913, HOTEL DU PONT has welcomed more than a dozen United States presidents, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and countless other iconic figures including Amelia Earhart, Katherine Hepburn, and Joe DiMaggio. In 1955, the Green Room provided a romantic and quiet backdrop for Prince Rainier III of Monaco and Grace Kelly to dine. The storied HOTEL DU PONT is steeped in the tradition of tea service. During the festive holiday season, afternoon tea is offered throughout December in the hotel's restaurant, Le Cavalier at the Green Room. Winner of the Historic Hotels of America Awards of Excellence Best Historic Restaurant, Le Cavalier at the Green Room provides teatime with a modern twist. At afternoon tea, Le Cavalier's Chef and Partner Tyler Akin uses Provençal influences into fanciful pastries and elegant hors d'oeuvres, including cucumber and tzatziki tea sandwiches, cornets with foie gras mousse and squash marmalade, olive oil cake with Meyer lemon agrumato, and the hotel's famous macarons. These are served with custom tea blends. In honor of the hotel's anniversary, HOTEL DU PONT will offer a quarterly afternoon tea service that nods to the hotel's illustrious history. These anniversary tea services—hosted by the hotel in the stately Du Barry Ballroom, which is adorned with parquet floors, crown molding, and a resplendent Yugoslavian crystal chandelier—will honor the history and traditions of the HOTEL DU PONT, while celebrating global influences. The first celebratory afternoon tea service will take place March 8 at 1:10 p.m. Reservations are required.

Claremont Club & Spa, A Fairmont Hotel (1915) Berkeley, California

Overlooking the San Francisco Bay, Berkeley, California's iconic Claremont Club & Spa, A Fairmont Hotel, has served traditional afternoon tea for decades. Opening its doors in 1915, the destination had to operate under strict Prohibition laws during its early history. While nationwide Prohibition did not take effect until 1920, the hotel was subject to an 1873 state statute that denied the sale of alcohol to any business within two miles of the University of California, Berkeley. It continued to operate under those conditions until 1937, when students at the university determined that the resort resided a few feet outside of the statute's zone of authority. Tea consumption and tea rooms boomed both during Prohibition and under these local laws, making afternoon tea popular at the Claremont Club & Spa. Today, afternoon tea is offered during the holiday season between November and December, and on select holidays throughout the year, including Mother's Day. Served in the Hilary Tenzing Room off the main lobby, affording spectacular views of San Francisco and its Bay, the elegant space exhibits one-of-a-kind artifacts and artwork. Live music accompanies afternoon tea on most occasions. Fine bone china and traditional accoutrements arrive at tables on a three-tier stand featuring sandwiches, scones, clotted cream, strawberry preserves, lemon curd, and sweets. Fairmont hotels serve their own brand of tea, LOT 35, and guests may also order sparkling wine or specialty tea cocktails.

[The Henley Park Hotel, Washington DC \(1918\) Washington, DC](#)

Founded in 1918, The Henley Park Hotel was once one of Washington, DC's most sought-after upscale apartment buildings, and is now one of the city's most charming luxury hotels. With its Tudor –Revival-style architecture and prime location on Massachusetts Avenue, the hotel is a perfect place to socialize in style. Indulge in afternoon tea at The Tavern At Henley Park Hotel, a setting full of natural light and original exposed brick, where visitors and locals alike can enjoy an afternoon respite. Specialties include house-made scones, served warm out of the oven, finger sandwiches, and seasonally inspired cocktails. The Tavern offers a special Valentine's Day tea and other special themed teas throughout the year. Reservations are required.

[Fairmont Olympic Hotel \(1924\) Seattle, Washington](#)

Listed in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places and a member of Historic Hotels of America since 2018, Seattle, Washington's Fairmont Olympic Hotel opened in December 1924. It featured some of the city's most famous and refined venues of the era, including the Palm Room, Assembly Lounge, and The Georgian. The latter venue, The Georgian, was where generations of Seattle residents once gathered for afternoon tea service; The Georgian hosted an afternoon tea for decades. Today, afternoon tea is offered in the Olympic Bar on Saturdays and Sundays by reservation. Steaming pots of LOT 35 tea, sumptuous tea sandwiches, delicious scones, and delicate pastries are served to guests in the modern lounge. Every day in December, the Fairmont Olympic Hotel offers holiday afternoon tea in its updated restaurant, The George. The George opened in 2021 and is a contemporary reimagining of the hotel's historic venue, The Georgian. Holiday afternoon tea at The George offers guests a festive twist on the experience, including live music. The hotel sells Fairmont's LOT 35 tea blends to visitors who want to take the experience home with them. **[Featured Recipe: The Fairmont Olympic Hotel's Earl Grey Tea Cookies](#)**

[La Valencia Hotel \(1926\) La Jolla, California](#)

La Valencia Hotel has embodied the idyllic charm of vintage California coastal hospitality in La Jolla since 1926. Called the "Jewel of San Diego," La Valencia's picturesque 11-story Spanish-tiled tower is a renowned landmark in both the village and throughout the region. In recent memory, afternoon tea has been offered at the hotel since 2018. La Valencia's afternoon tea is held in the Mediterranean Room, the hotel's signature restaurant. The tea service is offered seasonally and features assorted flavors in spring, fall, and winter. Guests are invited to marvel at the ocean views and the restaurant's Mediterranean-style décor while enjoying their tea specialties, made in-house by Executive Chef Fabian Aceves and Executive Pastry Chef Kari Cota. La Valencia's award-winning tea service is served on chic DAMMANN Frères tea ware. French DAMMANN Frères teas that are served include black tea, green tea, and a fruit-infusion tea. Guests enjoy a delectable assortment of scones, tea sandwiches, mini pastries, and desserts inspired by the season. A glass of bubbly is included, and a Champagne menu is available to

enhance the tea experience. The most popular specialty tea service is the holiday tea, offered in December, and featuring festive holiday flavors. La Valencia Hotel also offers a Pink Tea during October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, where a portion of its proceeds benefit Susan G. Komen San Diego.

Williamsburg Inn (1937) Williamsburg, Virginia

The Williamsburg Inn is the crown jewel of the Colonial Williamsburg hotels, adjacent to the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Area, recognized as one of the most complete community restorations in the world. Established in 1937, the Williamsburg Inn's whitewashed brick exterior, arches, and columns highlight the best of Neoclassical-style design. The inn's afternoon tea was first served in the elegantly appointed Inn East Lounge, overlooking the Queen's Lawn and the Lawn Bowling Greens of the Williamsburg Inn. For many years, the Williamsburg Inn would invite Gerald Charles Dickens, the Great-Great-Grandson of Charles Dickens, to read *A Christmas Carol* in the Regency Room, while serving a festive afternoon tea. Today, the Williamsburg Inn offers afternoon tea in the spring, summer, fall, and during the holidays. Special teatimes are offered during the holidays in December, the week of Valentine's Day, and Mother's Day weekend. Today, tea is served in the beautifully refurbished Goodwin Room at the Williamsburg Inn, and the tea is accompanied by the sounds of live Irish Harp music. Afternoon tea represents the height of luxury in Colonial Williamsburg. Guests are immersed in an elegant, Regency-style tea experience, complete with live music and beautiful Churchill China. The afternoon tea menu changes with the seasons, but the Williamsburg Inn features a light and flavorful Irish Cream-style scone recipe that was passed down to the Williamsburg Inn's chef from his mother. The culinary team will often collaborate with local tea artists to create a blend that will complement the menu. The tea that is featured that day can be purchased during the afternoon teatime. [*Featured Recipe: Williamsburg Inn's Lemon Curd for Lemon Cloud*](#)

The Lodge at Nemaocolin (1968) Farmington, Pennsylvania

A quintessential tradition of Old-World Europe can be found at Nemaocolin's glamorous afternoon tea, beckoning guests with savory sandwiches, creative pastries, tea, and a splash of bubbly for those who wish to indulge. A member of Historic Hotels of America since 2018, The Lodge at Nemaocolin in Farmington, Pennsylvania was originally established in 1968 as the hunting retreat for a Pittsburgh-based business magnate, Colonel Willard F. Rockwell. After it expanded and debuted as The Lodge at Nemaocolin in the late 1980s, this historic lodge is now part of the renowned Nemaocolin resort. Guests at the historic lodge and resort members alike are invited to partake in Nemaocolin's afternoon tea, which is served at The Tea Room at 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations are required. The tea is elegantly served in on fine porcelain place settings rimmed in 24-karat gold, featuring dainty hand-painted patterns of flowers, butterflies, grasshoppers, and ladybugs. The porcelain pieces come from Anna Weatherley Designs and her team of master painters in Budapest, Hungary, where it takes hours of intricate work to produce these one-of-a-kind pieces. Devonshire cream, lemon curd, a touch

of honey, lumps of raw sugar, and a bit of lemon are the complementary accompaniments to guests' choice of loose-leaf teas. Located just beyond The Chateau's lobby bar and fireplace, The Tea Room's aesthetic is *elegant*: classical music, sparkling chandeliers, and canary song.

“The most romantic and memorable hotels are at Historic Hotels of America, where every day is Valentine's Day. For unique, enjoyable, and unforgettable experiences, consider indulging in The 2023 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America Afternoon Tea Experiences. Many of the historic hotels featured in our list offer a Valentine's Day tea, a romantic teatime for two. We hope this list will inspire readers looking for an authentic setting and unique experience to celebrate their love, this month or any time of the year,” said Lawrence Horwitz, Executive Vice President, Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. “Many of our historic hotels, resorts, and inns have served guests afternoon tea since it became fashionable in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As 2023 is the 250th anniversary of the Tea Act and the Boston Tea Party, this is a perfect year to learn about, and enjoy, tea in the United States.”

About Historic Hotels of America®

Historic Hotels of America® is the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing, celebrating, and promoting the finest historic hotels in the United States of America. To be nominated and selected for membership in this prestigious program, a hotel must be at least 50 years old; designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark or listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and recognized as having historical significance. Of the more than 300 historic hotels inducted into Historic Hotels of America from 44 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, all historic hotels faithfully preserve their sense of authenticity, sense of place, and architectural integrity. For more information, please visit HistoricHotels.org/US.

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