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# HISTORIC HOTELS of AMERICA

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National Trust *for* Historic Preservation®

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## The 2024 Top 25 Historic Hotels of America® Afternoon Tea Experiences List Is Announced

WASHINGTON, D.C. - September 24, 2024 - Historic Hotels of America®, the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing and celebrating the finest historic hotels across America, is pleased to announce The 2024 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 customs of tea ceremonies date back millennia around the world, first in China, the tradition of Afternoon Tea—a meal served in the mid-afternoon with 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 England 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. And of course, tea was a subject of conversation and political affiliation at historic hotels dating to the Revolutionary Era. The 25 hotels included on this list offer visitors opportunities to discover the history of tea, indulge in Afternoon Tea, and experience its romantic allure within meticulously restored and preserved historic settings.

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

Nestled in 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 it was inducted in 1989, and a 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 resort's Garden Room during the 1920s, then in the Great Hall until the 1990s. In the 20th century, tea was served to each guest on a silver platter along with delicate finger sandwiches, petits fours, and the resort's own blend of hot tea. The Omni Homestead Resort even offered etiquette classes for younger guests, so they would be prepared to participate in formal Afternoon Teas as young adults. Today, a formal Afternoon Tea is offered on Friday and Saturday afternoons in the American Audubon Dining Room. This experience includes hot tea served with teacakes and sandwiches, as well as piano accompaniment. [Featured Recipe: The Omni Homestead Resort's Blueberry Scones.](#)

### **The Red Lion Inn** (1773) *Stockbridge, Massachusetts*

The Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, dates to 1773—opening the same year as the infamous Boston Tea Party and tracing its tea offerings to an era when drinking tea was a political statement, as well as an afternoon pick-me-up. In 1774, The Red Lion Inn became a popular gathering place for the people of the Province of Massachusetts Bay to discuss the Intolerable Acts passed by the British Parliament to respond to the Boston Tea Party and other anti-Monarchy activity. To mark the shared anniversaries, The Red Lion Inn introduced Afternoon Tea to its amenities in 2023. At the guests' request, tea can be taken in the lobby, side piazza, living room, front porch, treadway, or parlor. With advance notice, select areas of these rooms can be reserved. Afternoon Tea is served at The Red Lion Inn on Fridays and Saturdays. Select loose-leaf Harney & Sons tea blends, Earl Grey with hints of lavender, and green tea with notes of coconut, are served with traditional sweet and savory bites like Coronation Chicken and scones. Guests can also order from the inn's extensive wine list. During Afternoon Tea, servers even share details of the inn's history and traditions. This fall, the inn is offering a Spooky Tea, featuring tea served with dry ice mist alongside seasonal pastries. Tea lovers should note that one unique feature of The Red Lion Inn is its antiques collection. Mert Plumb, the wife of Charles H. Plumb, The Red Lion Inn's owner in the 1860s, was an antiques collector and amassed a vast collection of teapots. Today, guests are invited to tour the inn and look for the hundreds of teapots displayed throughout the property. The Red Lion Inn was inducted as a Charter Member of Historic Hotels of America in 1989.

### **The Willard InterContinental, Washington D.C.** (1818) *Washington, D.C.*

The Willard InterContinental, Washington, D.C. has been at the center of Washington's social and political life for over two centuries since opening in 1818. The hotel is situated two blocks from the White House and other important federal buildings, making it a perfect spot for the social elite and Washington powerbrokers to meet and 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. Afternoon Tea

at The Willard InterContinental, Washington, D.C. 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—the hotel's Afternoon Tea is now served among the grandeur of The Willard's Peacock Alley. Accompanied by the elegant sounds of the harp, guests enjoy a broad selection of the finest estate and boutique blended loose-leaf teas, savory finger sandwiches, decadent pastries, and freshly baked scones. To enhance the experience, guests can indulge in Moët & Chandon Champagne and Royal Ossetra or Baika Caviar, ensuring that every visit is memorable. In 2024, The Willard InterContinental proudly unveiled its Willard Tea Room—the newest addition to the hotel's renowned Afternoon Tea experience. This elegant space reimagines the classic tradition with refined grace, offering an intimate setting for guests to enjoy their tea service. The Willard Tea Room merges timeless elegance with modern luxury, making it the perfect setting for both Washington insiders and travelers alike to relax and savor this historic tradition.

#### **Antrim 1844 (1844)** *Taneytown, Maryland*

Antrim 1844 was a family farm for over 100 years before it was transformed into a boutique luxury hotel. Its tradition of serving Afternoon Tea began in 1991, and 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 out on the Veranda daily between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. At Antrim 1844's Afternoon Tea, classical piano music sets the tone. 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) and bite-size quiches. Sweets are house-made and also 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 list. In the winter, the hotel's 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, guests can enjoy Afternoon Tea before taking a stroll through the brick courtyard and blossoming Rose Garden. Antrim 1844 was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2007, and it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **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 Victorian look and feel of the mansion makes Afternoon Tea a unique experience for visitors. 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 parlor, amid the elegant surroundings of the 1858 mansion. The menu boasts the delicate finger sandwiches 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, 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. The Sayre Mansion was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2013.

### **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. Afternoon Tea was a daily event that Albert and his family observed, and the tradition has continued at Mohonk Mountain House since the 1870s. 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 the resort and out 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 that she cultivated. Today, Mohonk Mountain House serves Afternoon Tea in the Lake Lounge, where the tea counter was constructed with wood from the original 1899 bellmen's bench. At the Lake Lounge, guests can enjoy Afternoon Tea 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 Pekoe 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. Mohonk Mountain House, built in 1869 and a member of Historic Hotels of America since 1991, was designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark in 1986.

### **Palace Hotel (1875) San Francisco, California**

For over 100 years, the Palace Hotel has been a San Francisco landmark designed 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. Since the hotel's grand opening, visitors have basked in its 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 for 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 Hotel 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 the Prince & Princess Tea service with specialty sweets and savories, as well as a jeweled crown and candy scepter. The Palace Hotel sells tins of their custom Legacy Blend tea. The Palace Hotel serves holiday-themed teas in The Garden Court for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and throughout December. The Palace Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2010. [Featured Recipe: The Palace Hotel's Buttermilk Scones.](#)

### **The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa, Autograph Collection (1892) Denver, Colorado**

The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa, Autograph Collection has been the Grande Dame of Denver, Colorado, since the Italian Renaissance Revival-style hotel opened in 1892. Since then, guests have cherished the long-standing tradition of "taking tea" for more than a century. Originally, Afternoon Tea was served in the two-story "Ladies Ordinary" (a ladies lounge, tea room, and changing room combined, with staff to help guests into their evening wear before dinner) on the eighth floor. *The Brown Book*, a hotel publication from the late 1910s, explained: "A hotel such as the Brown Palace offers so many little reliefs from the monotonies of household cares. You see new faces, new gowns and hats. The Four O'Clock Tea is, of course, delightful." In 1986, the hotel moved its Afternoon Tea to the Atrium Lobby, an open space that stretches up 8-stories and is crowned by a stained-glass ceiling. Today, Afternoon Tea is served daily under the warm light that filters through the stained glass and with the soothing sounds of a harpist or pianist. Royal Doulton bone china, commissioned for the hotel, graces each tea table, along with engraved silver teapots filled with one of 20 different hot tea options. House-made scones are served with Devonshire clotted cream—imported from England—alongside savory tea sandwiches, and an exquisite selection of handmade classic tea pastries. A full complement of wines, champagnes, sherries and ports are also available. Throughout the year, the hotel offers special themed teas including a "Swift-Tea" series inspired by Taylor Swift, a Witches Tea for Halloween, holiday teas with the hotel decorated in its holiday grandeur, and the annual Steer at The Brown Palace.

The latter event is a beloved regional tradition, when The National Western Stock Show's Grand Champion Steer walks down a red carpet in the hotel and presides over a special Afternoon Tea. The hotel's celebrity guests tend to stay in their rooms, enjoy room service, and are scarcely seen. But when Oprah Winfrey stayed in 2005, she went down to Afternoon Tea, bought champagne for everyone, signed autographs and posed for pictures. The Brown Palace Hotel and Spa, Autograph Collection was inducted as a Charter Member of Historic Hotels of America in 1989.

### **The Jefferson Hotel (1895) *Richmond, Virginia***

Thousands of visitors flocked to The Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia, when it opened its doors in 1895. By the end of the decade, the grand 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 inducted as a Charter Member of Historic Hotels of America 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 footstool. 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 Fridays and Saturdays from 12 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., January through November. Afternoon Tea is served daily in December. The hotel serves a Southern Afternoon Tea, featuring a savory country ham sandwich—along with pastries and traditional scones and Devonshire cream, as well as options for gluten-free, dairy-free, 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 Gifts. On the 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.](#)

### **The Wall Street Hotel (1901) *New York, New York***

The Wall Street Hotel, located in the landmark Tontine Building, is a stylish retreat in the heart of Manhattan's Financial District. Within this historic Beaux-Arts-style building, the award-winning hotel offers a distinctive culinary experience with its Pearl Tea, which offers a modern twist to the traditional Afternoon Tea. Served at the Lounge on Pearl, Afternoon Tea at The Wall Street Hotel offers a classic tea service with a selection of both traditional and spirited teas (like Jasmine Green or Blueberry Merlot). Each option is carefully paired with seasonal pastries and



savory tea sandwiches. The Pearl Tea experience is designed to complement the rich flavors of the teas, providing a sophisticated twist on the classic afternoon ritual. The ambiance is serene and refined, with a backdrop of live classical music that enhances the tranquil atmosphere. Lounge on Pearl also features a Petite Pearl Tea for children, making for a family-friendly experience, with tailored tea options from Tea Forté. Available year-round, Pearl Tea is served Monday through Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Saturday through Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. During the month of May, in honor of Mother's Day, Lounge on Pearl serves a specialty drink called Mom's Cup O'Tea, a tea-inspired cocktail made with The Botanist Gin, Lillet Blanc, and Italicus. This offering highlights The Wall Street Hotel's blend of historic charm and modern sophistication, creating a refined yet accessible afternoon retreat in the heart of New York City. The Wall Street Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2023 and dates to 1901.

### **Hotel Iroquois (1902) *Mackinac Island, Michigan***

A luxurious waterfront hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan, Hotel Iroquois transports guests to another era, where they can indulge in charming traditions like horse-drawn carriage rides and Afternoon Tea. The Afternoon Tea menu is served in the hotel's Circle Porch at 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays this fall. The cozy atmosphere of the Circle Porch adds to the garden party-style of the afternoon tradition. Afternoon Tea at Hotel Iroquois is offered at the beginning and end of the season, when the Carriage House Restaurant is not open for lunch service. Guests can select from a variety of teas, including English Breakfast, English Teatime, White Ginger Pear, Citrus Mint, and Ginger Lemongrass, and choose from a variety of sweets and savories—all served on Wedgwood Hibiscus china. Bites include macarons, pâte de fruit, Mackinac Island Fudge Cream Puffs, mini lemon meringue pies, cucumber sandwiches, deviled eggs, smoked whitefish on crostini, scones, and the hotel's famous blueberry muffins. The mini lemon meringue pies and cream puffs are miniature versions of the hotel's signature desserts, which are served in the Carriage House Restaurant. In addition to the usual tea and bites, the hotel provides each guest with a miniature fascinator to wear, if they wish to elevate their style. The historic island destination has long captured the imaginations of its visitors, and Hotel Iroquois has welcomed guests since 1902. Hotel Iroquois was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2023.

### **The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco (1907) *San Francisco, California***

Afternoon Tea at The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco has been steeped in tradition since 1907. Served in the hotel's spectacular Laurel Court Restaurant, with polished silver, fine china, and Victorian accoutrements, Afternoon Tea at this storied Grande Dame in the "City by the Bay" stands out as the epitome of classic luxury, delivering a quintessentially five-star experience. The Laurel Court Restaurant dazzles with its soaring domed ceiling, commanding columns, Tuscan-

style frescoes, and ornate detailing. Guests are invited to gather their friends and family to enjoy steaming pots of fine loose-leaf tea with house-made scones, tea sandwiches on artisan bread, luscious fruit-topped pastries, and French sweets delivered in elegant style. Requisite sides include lemon curd, Devonshire cream, and fruit compote. Renowned for its grandeur and historic charm, Afternoon Tea offers guests an elegant retreat from the exuberance of the city throughout the year. But for a particularly magical teatime, guests can reserve a table during the holidays and experience The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco's Holiday Tea. Holiday magic comes to life with the hotel's famous life-sized Gingerbread House, on display from Thanksgiving through the New Year. To truly elevate their experience, guests can book the Gingerbread House Table for private dining or a Holiday Tea. Additionally, the hotel occasionally offers special activations, like the Wicked Tea (running through October 12, 2024) to celebrate the theatrical production of the hit musical, *Wicked*, at the city's Orpheum Theatre. The Fairmont Hotel San Francisco was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2001.

### **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 by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark, The Plaza 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 and ceiling-high palm trees, trellis detailing, and custom furnishings with cane accents, all under the soaring stained-glass dome. Today, Afternoon Tea is served daily from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each Afternoon 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. Children are invited to order from the Eloise Afternoon Tea menu. The Palm Court serves a selection of teas by Palais des Thés. The hotel recommends the crowd favorite, Thé 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 merchandise.

### **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 hotel's annual Holiday Tea is the longest-running experience, and is available this year 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 adorn 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. 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. Inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1996, Hotel Boulderado continues to charm all those who step inside.

### **The Hermitage Hotel (1910) Nashville, Tennessee**

Being famous for its role in the passage of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, 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 quickly became the place for the city’s fashionable society to meet. 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, as well as legislators and lobbyists, in the weeks leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The hotel was the headquarters for the Nashville Equal Suffrage League, but the complexity of this political moment was captured during teatime at The Hermitage Hotel: in August 1920, a large tea event was organized by the *anti*-suffrage campaigners on the mezzanine level. In recent years, The Hermitage Hotel has hosted the Yellow Rose Tea annually in August in honor of the Women’s Suffrage Movement. The Hermitage Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1996 and was designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark. Throughout the year, the hotel offers a variety of Afternoon Tea experiences, including “Spillin’ Tea with Draper James,” inspired by recipes included in actress and producer Reese Witherspoon’s book, *Whiskey in a Teacup*. This experience is offered on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. Reservations are required.

### **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, with 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 Afternoon Tea in the Palm Room during its early years. Today, Afternoon Tea is served in the lobby on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:00 p.m., with live piano music. During the holiday

season, festive Holiday Afternoon Tea is served Wednesday through Sunday. The hotel serves a special tea blend custom-made for its tea service, a black currant tea, which can be purchased at the front desk. The Saint Paul Hotel invites tea 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 guests 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 guests 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 Afternoon Tea, and the rules of etiquette while enjoying that delightful cup. The Saint Paul Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1991.

### **HOTEL DU PONT (1913) *Wilmington, Delaware***

HOTEL DU PONT’s Afternoon Tea tradition was established in 1913, the same year that the hotel opened, for dignitaries in the men’s clubroom. Today, it persists as a beloved ritual that celebrates both the past and the present at Wilmington, Delaware’s Grande Dame. In celebration of its 110th anniversary in 2023, HOTEL DU PONT breathed new life into this tradition with a series of themed events that blend timeless elegance with modern pop culture. Now, guests can immerse themselves in unforgettable experiences like the *Bridgerton*-inspired “Diamond of the Tea-Son” or “A SwifTea Party” listening event, all while savoring exquisite tea selections and indulgent treats. Teas are also held for special occasions, such as the Valentine’s Weekend Tippy Tea. Afternoon Tea is typically served in the Du Barry Room or the Gold Ballroom, with both ornately designed ballrooms evoking a sense of luxury. During the holiday season, Afternoon Teas are served at Le Cavalier, the hotel’s historic, award-winning restaurant. Elegant tables are dressed with crisp, white linen tablecloths, and meticulously set with fine china specially commissioned for the storied hotel. The teas served include organic caffeinated and caffeine-free blends, including traditional black and green teas, fruity and citrus blends, and chamomile teas. HOTEL DU PONT was inducted as a Charter Member of Historic Hotels of America in 1989.

### **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 alike in a grand way: by offering Afternoon Tea. While there may have been an earlier Afternoon Tea service in the hotel’s history, 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. The hotel describes its Afternoon Tea aesthetic as traditional, serving drinks and snacks on fine bone china, with crystal

sugar bowls, and on linen tablecloths. Light instrumental jazz music plays during the 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. The Ashton Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2008.

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

Overlooking the San Francisco Bay, the iconic Claremont Club & Spa, A Fairmont Hotel in Berkeley, California, 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 these 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 a popular activity 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 and Galentine's Day. Served in the Lobby Lounge, Afternoon Tea at the Claremont Club & Spa offers guests spectacular views of San Francisco and its Bay in a sophisticated space. During the holidays, live music accompanies Afternoon Tea, and the hotel features beautiful holiday décor. 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. Claremont Club & Spa, A Fairmont Hotel was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2016.

### **Omni William Penn (1916) Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

When the Omni William Penn opened in 1916, its founders envisioned a Pittsburgh Grande Dame to rival the finest hotels in Europe. The services available to guests were extensive, from fine shops to bakeries, and even a barber shop. As another part of that European influence, Afternoon Tea was served in the Terrace Room. In recent years, Afternoon Tea has found a new location in the Palm Court, a venue that allows guests and locals alike to enjoy the hotel's grand lobby. Today, Afternoon Tea is offered in the Palm Court of the Omni William Penn every Saturday and Sunday from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. As guests sip tea and sample sweets, savories,

and scones, they are transported to a refined moment in history, memorialized in the architecture and ambience of the Omni William Penn. Hand-stamped traditional china is part of the impeccable table setting, which includes a three-tiered cake stand bearing the selections of the day. Children are invited to order from the *Alice in Wonderland* menu. Specialty tea menus are also available on Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. When spring brings pink petals to Pittsburgh during the Cherry Blossom Festival, Afternoon Tea features cherry teas and delightful sweets that lean into all things pink. For the winter holidays, the Afternoon Tea adjusts to the flavors of the fall and winter, featuring cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves. Guests return year after year to experience Afternoon Tea at the Omni William Penn, like the couple who married at the hotel in 1964 and returned for a 60th wedding anniversary Afternoon Tea. Others bring their children and grandchildren, recalling memories of their own parents taking them to Afternoon Tea at the hotel. Omni William Penn was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2010.

### **The Henley Park Hotel, Washington DC (1918) *Washington, D.C.***

When it opened in 1918, The Henley Park Hotel, Washington DC was one of Washington, D.C.'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, it is the perfect place for both travelers and locals to socialize in style. Visitors can indulge in Afternoon Tea at The Tavern at The Henley Park Hotel, a setting full of natural light and original exposed brick, where visitors and locals alike can enjoy an afternoon respite. The hotel serves two regular Afternoon Tea menus throughout the year: the English Tea and Royal Tea. The latter adds a petite dessert assortment, including tartlets and chocolate truffles, to the regular English Tea. Specialties include house-made scones, finger sandwiches, and seasonally inspired cocktails. The Tavern also offers special themed Afternoon Tea experiences throughout the year, such as the Valentine's Day Tea and the Garden Tea in the summer. Reservations are required. The Henley Park Hotel, Washington DC was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1994.

### **The Biltmore Los Angeles (1923) *Los Angeles, California***

In the heart of Los Angeles, California, The Biltmore Los Angeles retains many of the opulent features that made it an overnight success when Hollywood's Grande Dame first debuted in 1923, from brilliant bronze bas-reliefs and 24-karat-gold accents to breathtaking Greco-Roman-inspired frescoed ceilings dripping with glittering Italian chandeliers. Guests can reserve a spot to dine amidst this splendor at the hotel's Rendezvous Court Café, which serves Afternoon Tea by the rose marble fountain, underneath a Moorish carved-wood ceiling. The menu includes traditional finger sandwiches, scones, and pastries. Guests can enjoy tea—uniquely crafted for the hotel—as well as a glass of champagne while delighting in a specially curated menu of sweets and savories from the hotel's celebrated chef. Afternoon Tea is available on Saturdays

from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and smart casual dress is encouraged. The Biltmore Los Angeles was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 2024.

### **The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, Autograph Collection (1925) *St. Petersburg, Florida***

Nestled along the downtown St. Petersburg waterfront, The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, Autograph Collection is a historic landmark hotel that opened its doors on New Year's Eve in 1925. As part of the resort's recent comprehensive renovation, its amenities now include a history tour and tea experience—the only refined high tea offering in downtown St. Petersburg. Locals and guests alike can take a step back in time with a guided tour of the historic resort led by trained docents, who share personal stories as they guide guests through archival photos and memorabilia dating back to 1925. Following the tour, a luxe high tea is served on the mezzanine. Guests can select from a thoughtfully curated variety of tea options as they enjoy classic Afternoon Tea bites, including elegant finger sandwiches, freshly baked scones, and delectable, sweet treats from Lottie, The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club's new French patisserie. The Vinoy also offers special themed teas, including a Nutcracker Tea in December, where guests are served festive teas and pastries like peppermint chocolate chip cookies, while they interact with elements from the traditional holiday ballet, *The Nutcracker*. New for 2024, the resort recently announced the renovation of its outdoor Tea Garden, transforming the space into an elegant and serene area that will host the History Tour and High Tea events, as well as seasonal tea tastings. The History Tour and High Tea experience is offered Thursday through Sunday from 2-5 p.m. The Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, Autograph Collection was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1991.

### **The Hotel Viking (1926) *Newport, Rhode Island***

The Hotel Viking has served Afternoon Tea since the hotel opened in 1926, providing visitors to Rhode Island's "City by the Sea" a setting for high society social gatherings and a sophisticated midday break. Today, Afternoon Tea is served on Saturdays and Sundays, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., throughout the year in the Garden Room of the hotel's restaurant, One Bellevue. Most weekends, the Afternoon Tea is traditional, with floral china and tiered tea towers. Sweet and savory foods, including tea sandwiches, petit fours, scones, and macarons are served alongside a variety of loose-leaf herbal, white, green, and black teas. The beverage cart also offers champagne and cocktails to elevate the experience. The suggested attire for Afternoon Tea is smart casual. For special occasions, such as Mother's Day, Galentine's Day, and the December holiday season, the menu and décor are themed. For the holiday Nutcracker Tea, guests enjoy live entertainment by a local dance company. During any time of the year, The Hotel Viking provides guests with the ambiance and glamour of historic Newport, Rhode Island, where America's wealthiest families flocked to escape the noise of New York City and to relax and

socialize since the Gilded Age. The Hotel Viking was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1997.

### **Williamsburg Inn** (1937) *Williamsburg, Virginia*

The Williamsburg Inn is the crown jewel of the Colonial Williamsburg hotels, and is adjacent to the Colonial Williamsburg Historic Area, which is 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 East Lounge, overlooking the Queen's Terrace and the lawn of the Williamsburg Inn. Today, Afternoon 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. The Williamsburg Inn offers Afternoon Tea year-round. Special teatimes are offered during the holidays in December, the week of Valentine's Day, Mother's Day weekend, and Spooky Season. This fall, the inn is serving "Spooky Sips Afternoon Tea," a special event featuring a Halloween-inspired menu accompanied by a signature tea created in collaboration with the Tea and Spice Exchange. Whichever tea experience guests select, they 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. Williamsburg Inn was inducted into Historic Hotels of America in 1994. [Featured Recipe: Williamsburg Inn's Lemon Cloud.](#)

"The Afternoon Tea tradition is timeless and beloved around the world. Many historic hotels, resorts, and inns of Historic Hotels of America have served guests Afternoon Tea since it became fashionable in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Historic hotels today offer a variety of Afternoon Tea experiences, from the classic English menu to tea services with a creative and modern twist," said Lawrence Horwitz, Executive Vice President, Historic Hotels of America and Historic Hotels Worldwide. "We hope this list will inspire readers who are looking for an authentic setting to celebrate or simply relax. Afternoon Tea can be enjoyed as a quiet, solo respite or shared with loved ones."

### **About Historic Hotels of America®**

Historic Hotels of America® is the official program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing and celebrating the finest historic hotels across the United States of America. The National Trust for Historic Preservation was chartered by U.S. Congress in 1949 and is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is



leading the movement to save the places where our history happened. 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, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, all historic hotels faithfully preserve their authenticity, sense of place, and architectural integrity. For more information, please visit [HistoricHotels.org](http://HistoricHotels.org).

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