

A Day Trip Windsor and Eton

Fun Facts

- ★ Windsor Castle is the oldest and largest continuously inhabited castle in the world.
- ★ The first castle at Windsor was a simple mound of earth topped by a wooden palisade, and was built on the orders of William the Conqueror in 1070.
- ★ Nowadays the Queen spends more time at Windsor than at Buckingham Palace, partly because she can still go horse-riding there.
- ★ Unlike Versailles Windsor is still a working palace where the Queen entertains foreign monarchs, presidents and prime ministers.
- ★ Boris Johnson is the twentieth British Prime Minister to have been educated at Eton – fees £42,000 per year. Prince William and Prince Harry are also Old Etonians.
- ★ Fictional Old Etonians include James Bond and Captain Hook.

Windsor Castle (www.rct.uk)

- ★ Your entry fee (£20.30) for a tour of the State Apartments includes the hire of an excellent audio guide. There is a Historic Route and Ceremonial Route. You can do both.
- ★ No photography is allowed inside any building but you can photograph the building exteriors and the castle precincts (free half hour tour).
- ★ If you get there at opening time (10.00) you could visit St. George's Chapel (where Prince Harry and Meghan Markle were married) and then see the Changing of the Guard at 11.00 (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) before touring the State Apartments. If, however, you arrive after 11.30 the coach tour visitors will be on their way to Stonehenge and Bath and it will be much less crowded.
- ★ There is a lot to see, so allow an hour for the State Apartments, which feature one of the most sumptuous and expensive schemes of interior decoration ever undertaken in England. Apart from paintings by Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens and Canaletto, there are the famous portraits of the Duke of Wellington and his allies who defeated Napoleon. A particular highlight is Queen Mary's Dolls' House, furnished with contributions from 1,500 artists, craftsmen and manufacturers. It even has electricity and running water. In the Moat Room are three bronze models of the castle as it was in 1080, 1216 and 1377.

Eton College

Eton College stands on the opposite bank of the River Thames and can be reached by a pedestrian foot bridge. Guided tours (£10+ booking fee) are available (April-August) on Fridays (2.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m.). Eton also has 3 museums – the Natural History Museum, the Museum of Antiquities and the Museum of Eton Life. These are open (free) to the public on Sunday afternoons

2.30 p.m. – 5.00 p.m). There is also an Eton Walkway, a two mile circular tour of the town of Eton taking in eighteen points of historical interest.

Other Attractions

- ★ The Duck Tour (£18.00) uses an amphibious vehicle to show off the local sights by road and river.
- ★ Legoland (£29.00) is a bus ride away (Shuttle bus £5.50 return or Route 702).
- ★ Because it receives so many visitors Windsor supports a far better range of shops than other towns of comparable size.

Getting There

- ★ The rail service from Paddington to Windsor and Eton Central involves changing at Slough (easy – you just cross the platform). Journey times vary from 30 to 50 minutes. This is usually faster than the more direct route from Waterloo, which stops at a dozen local stations and takes 55 minutes. Both routes cost £10.50 return (January 2020).
- ★ The Green Line 702 bus service (£10.00 return) to Windsor runs hourly from Victoria Coach Station and takes 1 hour 30 minutes. There is also a National Express service.