

A Cup Of Tea With Your Day Out?

There are tea rooms around the country that are as much of a treat to visit as the places they're in. Roger Redfern selects his favourites



Cornwall

1 Sail Loft Restaurant, St Michael's Mount

Fortress-like St Michael's Mount lies off the southern coast of Cornwall and is the long-time home of the St Aubyn family. You can cross from the mainland on foot at low tide or use the amphibious vehicle service, or ferry boats when the tide is in, then climb the cobbled path to the castle and enjoy its giddy views. Afterwards, sit down in the National Trust-run Sail Loft — an original sailing loft with beamed ceiling, white walls and fantastic views of Mount Harbour. Enjoy a clotted cream tea with a selection of home-made delicacies, such as Cornish Fairings (spiced ginger biscuits), brownies and carrot cake.

The Sail Loft is open the same times as the castle from March to October (check times before going). You don't have to pay the NT entry fee if you're visiting the Sail Loft.

● **Sail Loft Restaurant, St Michael's Mount, Marazion, Cornwall (01736 710748; www.stmichaelsmount.co.uk).**



The Old Post Office is full of character

Northern Ireland

2 The Old Post Office, Lisbane

If you travel south-eastwards from Belfast, towards the western shores of beautiful Strangford Lough, you'll come to the small village of Lisbane, where you'll find a traditional, quaint 1840s' building — The Old Post Office. It lay derelict for many years before being sympathetically restored to what we see today. The tea room serves tempting, home-made tarts, biscuits and gateaux. A favourite with regulars are the spicy cinnamon scones.

● **The Old Post Office, 191 Killinchy Road, Lisbane, Comber, Northern Ireland (028 9754 3335; www.oldpostofficelisbane.co.uk).**



North Wales

3 Cemlyn Tea Shop, Harlech

Beyond the mountains of Snowdonia and close to Cardigan Bay, is the small, historic town of Harlech, famous for its magnificent medieval castle. The Cemlyn Tea Shop occupies a white-painted Victorian building beside the High Street and was crowned "Top Tea Place in Wales" in 2010 and 2011. The tables offer spectacular views to the ramparts of the nearby castle and down across a great area of sand dunes to the shining surface of Cardigan Bay and the famous Royal St David's Golf Course. Their famous cream teas are served with "only the very best local Welsh cream". Local specialities include bara brith — a fruited tea bread.

● **Cemlyn Tea Shop, High Street, Harlech, Gwynedd (01766 780425; www.cemlynrestaurant.co.uk).**



Cemlyn comes complete with castle views

Scotland

4 Willow Tea Rooms, Glasgow

This fashionable establishment, designed by famed Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1904, continues to welcome visitors to Glasgow more than a century later. Culinary delights awaiting you include Scottish smoked salmon with scrambled eggs, Arbroath Smokies (dry salted and smoked haddock) and haggis. The afternoon tea menu includes Scottish scones (scones are said to originate in Scotland), buttered gingerbread, cloutie dumplings (dumplings with sultanas and spices) and, of course, Scottish shortbread.



Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed this elegant room

Willow Tea Rooms, 217 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow (0141 332 0521; www.willowtearooms.co.uk).

Yorkshire

5 Bettys Café Tea Room, Harrogate

Probably our best-known tea rooms, Bettys has six branches, all in Yorkshire. The firm was established in 1919 in Harrogate, by Swiss baker Frederick Belmont. On his travels round Europe, he decided to stay in Yorkshire because the Dales' landscape reminded him of his native country.

Afternoon tea is served all day and includes two types of sandwich, scone with jam and cream, and miniature cakes. A speciality is the plump, fruity cake similar to a scone, known as a "Fat Rascal".

Betty's identity remains a mystery, though a popular explanation is that a little girl called Betty interrupted a board meeting when the name was being discussed.

● **Bettys Café and Tea Rooms, 1 Parliament Street, Harrogate, North Yorkshire (01423 814070; www.bettys.co.uk).**

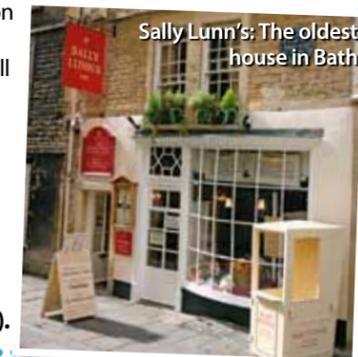


Bettys offers a delicious spread

6 Sally Lunn's House

Not only is this catering establishment the oldest house in the Roman spa (later, Georgian) city of Bath, it's also the place where the young Huguenot baker, Sally Lunn, created the first Bath bun after her arrival here from France in 1680. Defined as "a rich, round and generous brioche bun", it became a worldwide favourite, but the secret recipe is passed on with the deeds of the building, where it's still handmade. As well as afternoon tea, other meals can be had through the day — from morning coffee to the traditional "Trencher" dinner. Open 10am-6pm; evening menu available 6pm-10pm.

● **Sally Lunn's House, North Parade Passage, Bath (01225 461634; www.sallylunns.co.uk).**



Sally Lunn's: The oldest house in Bath

Tea Near You

- ☪ The Tea Guild*, sponsored by the UK Tea Council, awarded Top Tea Place 2011 to Rocke Cottage Tea Rooms, Abcott, Clungunford, Craven Arms, Shropshire. Call 01588 660631, or visit www.rockecottage-tearoom.co.uk
 - ☪ Kind Kyttock's Kitchen, Cross Wynd, Falkland, Cupar, Fife. Call 01337 857477 (closed Mon).
 - ☪ The Market Place Teashop, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham. Call 01833 690110 (closed Sun).
 - ☪ Northern Tea Merchants, Chatsworth Road, Brampton, Chesterfield. Call 01246 232600 (closed Sun).
 - ☪ Peacocks Tea Rooms, 65 Waterside, Ely, Cambridgeshire. Call 01353 661100 (closed Mon/Tues).
 - ☪ Tea On The Green, 3 Eves Corner, Danbury, Essex. Call 01245 226616.
 - ☪ Orange Pekoe, 3 White Hart Lane, Barnes, London SW13. Call 020 8876 6070.
 - ☪ Muffins Tea Shop, 32 Fore Street, Lostwithiel, Cornwall. Call 01208 872278 (closed Sun/Mon, except in July/August).
 - ☪ The Old Stables Tea Rooms, Bear Street, Hay-on-Wye. Call 07796 484766 (closed Sun/Mon).
- * To find a Tea Guild member serving tea near you, visit www.tea.co.uk/guild-members
- The Tea Guild's guidebook, *Afternoon Tea — Perfect Places For Afternoon Tea* (The AA, £9.99), is published at the end of July.