

GETTING STARTED – THE BASICS

WHAT IS THE ROOF GARDENS?

The Roof Gardens is a spectacular set of themed gardens 100 feet above Kensington High Street. There are three distinct areas: Spanish, Tudor, and English Woodland, all arranged around the central Clubhouse and spread across the 6th floor of a Grade II listed building. Events at The Roof Gardens are held in the Clubhouse and in the gardens, and on Friday and Saturday nights the Clubhouse is transformed into a Private Members Club. Babylon Restaurant is easily accessible on the 7th floor and is a restaurant open to the public.

WHERE IS THE ROOF GARDENS?

The Roof Gardens is located at 99 Kensington High Street (London, W8 5SA). Access to the building is via Derry Street which branches off Kensington High Street.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

The Roof Gardens is easily accessible by public transport.

London Underground:

- High Street Kensington Station on the District and Circle lines.

London Buses:

- Bus #9 (Aldwych > Kensington High Street > Hammersmith)
- Bus #10 (Hammersmith > Kensington High Street > King's Cross)
- Bus #52 (Victoria > Kensington High Street > Ladbroke Grove)

We are also only a short walk from Kensington Gardens, part of London's sprawling Hyde Park, as well as the exclusive Holland Park area of the city. Kensington High Street has great shopping, and you're only a 30 minute walk or two stops on the Tube from the world-renowned museums in South Kensington.

IF I DRIVE, IS THERE ANYWHERE FOR ME TO PARK?

During the day you can use the National Car Park at 19-27 Young Street, London W8 5EH. Parking is also available at the Euro Car Park situated at 2-24 Kensington High Street (Royal Garden Hotel), London W8 4PT. In the evenings you can find parking in the streets around The Roof Gardens.

SO IT'S JUST GARDENS? WHAT CAN YOU DO AT THE ROOF GARDENS?

Well of course there are 1.5 acres of gardens. But there's also a Clubhouse in the middle which doubles as a year-round events venue. On the 7th floor above the Clubhouse sits Babylon Restaurant, open year-round to anyone that wants to make a reservation. Babylon has a terrace in summer looking over the Woodland Garden, but since we're so high up, the views over London are amazing regardless of the season!

RIGHT, SO IT'S GARDENS, IT'S EVENTS, AND THERE'S A RESTAURANT TOO. ANYTHING ELSE?

Well, yes. On Friday and Saturday nights the Clubhouse turns into a Private Members Club featuring two indoor bars, two outdoor bars (during the summer months), a dance floor, DJs, and music until 3am.

IS THERE WHEELCHAIR ACCESS?

Both the 6th and 7th floors that make up The Roof Gardens and Babylon Restaurant are wheelchair accessible, with lifts up to both floors. Let us know ahead of time that step-free access will be required, and we can arrange for ramps to be put in place to ensure full access to the gardens.

EVENTS AT THE ROOF GARDENS

WHAT KIND OF EVENTS ARE POSSIBLE AT THE ROOF GARDENS?

We host weddings, corporate functions, anniversaries, cocktail parties, product launches, you name it! From dinners to discos, fashion shows to fireworks, we can be as flexible as you need us to be. If your vision is for example a Moulin Rouge themed evening with décor, food, and entertainment to match then we can happily organise that for you. We also have themed events throughout the year, like our summer BBQs in the Tudor Garden, as well as shared parties on Club nights around Christmas time, so keep an eye out for special offers.








IS THE ROOF GARDENS JUST A SUMMER VENUE?

No, not at all. The Clubhouse has large floor to ceiling windows with fantastic views of the gardens in all seasons. We also have a marquee with heaters in the Tudor Garden during the Christmas period so people can still enjoy the gardens even when the weather's not at its best.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ROOF GARDENS

WHAT IS THE CAPACITY OF THE ROOF GARDENS EVENT SPACE?

We can host events for 10 to as many as 500 people. Day hire is from 9am to 5pm (Monday to Saturday) and evening hire is from 7pm to 12:30am from Monday to Thursday and from 12pm to 12am on Sundays. We're happy to offer packages based on minimum guest numbers or exclusive hires for a minimum spend. The different configurations and maximum capacities are shown below.

 150	 50	 70	 200	 180	 500	 500
Theatre	Boardroom	Classroom	Set Lunch/ Dinner	Dinner dance (seated)	BBQ/Buffer (standing)	Reception (standing)

WHAT'S THE FOOD LIKE AT THE ROOF GARDENS?

We understand how the quality of the food at an event can be one of the key factors in ensuring the happiness of your guests. With that approach firmly in mind, we take advantage of the seasonal ingredients on offer. The food we serve is inspired by the places we've been, and even by some we haven't! We can tailor the food to your requirements, and if you've got a special request, you need only ask.

CAN I GET MARRIED AT THE ROOF GARDENS?

Absolutely! The Roof Gardens is fully licensed to perform civil marriage ceremonies and civil partnerships indoors. Outdoor services are unfortunately not possible but that doesn't prevent you from holding your reception outside. Religious ceremonies for those not of the Christian faith can be easily arranged outdoors so you can take advantage of the splendour of the gardens for your special day. Contact our team for full details on planning a wedding or partnership, as we can propose a range of options incorporating the facilities of both The Roof Gardens and Babylon.

WHAT ABOUT BAR/BAT MITZVAHS?

We certainly welcome Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies at The Roof Gardens, though in these cases you have the option to work with specialised external caterers.

CAN I HIRE BOTH FLOORS FOR MY EVENT?

Yes. Both Babylon Restaurant and The Roof Gardens can be hired together on an exclusive basis, subject to availability.

HOW MUCH IS IT TO HIRE THE ROOF GARDENS?

This depends on the time of year and the size of your event. It's best to speak with someone in the events office who would be happy to discuss your requirements. Call us on +44 (0) 207 368 3971, or email us at events@roofgardens.virgin.com; a member of our team will get back to you as soon as possible.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO ASK FOR A LATE LICENSE?

We can request a late license for a specific event which would allow us to stay open until 3am, but there would be an additional charge for this service.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR SECURITY AT MY EVENT?

All events at The Roof Gardens are required to have a minimum of two security guards (although we can sometimes permit just one for very small events). You should allow for one additional security guard per 100 guests above the basic threshold of 100 people. This requirement is part of our alcohol license and is a legal obligation, so we can't be flexible, even if you promise to be on your best behaviour!

BABYLON RESTAURANT

WHERE IS BABYLON RESTAURANT?

Babylon is situated on the 7th floor and is accessible directly by lift from the ground floor. Or, if you arrive at The Roof Gardens first on the 6th floor you can walk up the stairs to our welcome desk and restaurant bar.

WHAT CAN I SEE FROM BABYLON?

The best views are from Babylon's terrace. To the east you can see the City, St. Paul's, Canary Wharf, and Centre Point. To the south is the National History Museum, Battersea Power Station, Crystal Palace, and to the west you can see Earl's Court, Kensington Olympia, and Richmond Park.

WHEN IS BABYLON OPEN?

Babylon Restaurant is open Monday to Saturday from 12pm to 2.30pm for lunch, and from 7pm to 10.30pm for dinner. The restaurant also opens for lunch on Sunday from 12pm to 2.30pm.

WHAT IS THE FOOD LIKE?

The award winning food at Babylon is best described as contemporary British cuisine. Our menus change regularly to ensure that only the freshest, seasonal and sustainably sourced ingredients are used.

IS THERE A BAR AT BABYLON?

There is a bar, but it's only a small one and it's designed to welcome those dining in the restaurant – you can pop in for a drink but it's always best to call up beforehand to check how busy we are!

DO YOU CATER FOR SPECIAL DIETS?

We'll certainly do our best. If you look at our à la carte menu online and see something you particularly fancy, do let us know in advance and we'll see what we can do.

DID YOU KNOW? BABYLON CAN BE HIRED FOR GROUPS OR EVEN EXCLUSIVELY

There is a private dining room with space for up to 12 at the rear of the restaurant with its own terrace overlooking the flamingos in the Woodland Garden. It is also possible to hire the semi-private area for up to 28 people. If you're really in the mood for a party, we'd be happy to let you hire the entire restaurant which seats up to 120 people, or hire it for a cocktail reception for up to 150 people.

CAN I EAT OUTSIDE?

Babylon has an outside terrace available during the summer months, although we seat this space on a first-come, first-served basis, regardless of whether you have made a reservation.

ARE CHILDREN WELCOME?

Children are always welcome, and we have a special menu for our younger diners with very favourable prices for two courses. Kiddie packs are provided for children on arrival, and on Sundays a magician is on hand to keep the kids fully entertained!

THE PRIVATE MEMBERS CLUB

HOW DO I JOIN THE PRIVATE MEMBERS CLUB?

As a member, not only do you get to join the fast track VIP entry queue, but you'll receive priority when reserving VIP areas, invitations to exclusive members-only events, 20% off your bill in Babylon, various other discounts and much more. You can become a member by filling in an application form and paying an annual fee, subject to approval by the membership committee.

WHAT ARE THE MEMBERSHIP LEVELS AT THE PRIVATE MEMBERS CLUB?

To request a membership pack with full details, contact us by emailing club@roofgardens.virgin.com, calling +44 (0) 207 368 3992, or visit our website www.roofgardensclub.com.

CAN I COME TO THE CLUB IF I'M NOT A MEMBER?

If you're not a member you're still welcome to come to The Club, but you'll need to pay an entry fee and get on the guest list. Go to <http://gls.roofgardens.com> to put your name on the guest list. If you're dining in Babylon on a Friday or Saturday night please speak to your waiter who can arrange entry to The Club for a reduced fee following your meal.

THE GARDENS

CAN I POP IN TO VISIT THE GARDENS?

Yes, but please call ahead to arrange an appointment as when The Roof Gardens is booked for a private event, the gardens are unavailable for viewing. A good way to make sure you at least get a glimpse of the gardens is to book lunch or dinner at Babylon. Call +44 (0) 207 937 7994 to organise a visit to the gardens, or +44 (0) 207 368 3993 to reserve a table at Babylon.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE GARDENS. WHAT'S THE HISTORY?

The history of the gardens began in 1936 when Trevor Bowen, the then Vice President of Barkers, a department store, had a vision of creating an urban escape on London's rooftops. Two years later, The Roof Gardens were completed at a cost of £25,000, with one and a half acres of gardens 100 feet above street level split into three distinct areas: the Spanish Garden, the Woodland Garden, and the Tudor Garden. In May 1938 the gardens were opened to the public for viewing, at a cost of 1 shilling (about 5 pence) which raised over £120,000 for three local hospitals over 30 years. The building itself is now a Grade II listed structure, and the local council placed a 'Tree Preservation Order' on all the trees in 1976 to prevent any unnecessary removal or harmful pruning. The structure of The Roof Gardens remained essentially unchanged until 2001, when an additional floor was added to the building to house the restaurant Babylon.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GARDENS?

Of the three distinct gardens, the Spanish Garden was inspired by the Alhambra in Granada, and is characterised by manicured lawns, fountains, and colourful seasonal bedding plants, all arranged around a

central courtyard. The Woodland Garden is undoubtedly at its best in the spring months, and features almost 100 different species of trees, some of which were planted more than 70 years ago. This garden stretches all the way along the length of the roof, with full grown oak, lime and fruit trees growing in just 1.5m of soil. This garden also has four resident flamingos, a play area for the ducks, and a fish pond harbouring a number of different species. Finally, the Tudor Garden is a delightful combination of Tudor-style archways and walls punctuated by secret corners, hanging wisteria, and a beautiful display of flowers in spring. Evergreen shrubs are surrounded by fragrant lilies, roses and lavender during the summer months, and look for the detailed hunting scene carved in the Tudor arches as well as the occasional artefact peering out amongst the trailing climbers.

HOW DO YOU KEEP THE GARDENS LOOKING FRESH?

Maintaining the gardens is quite a feat: each year about 3,000 bulbs are planted, mostly in spring, which is also the time for tidying up, pruning, and making sure all the trees are in good health. The gardens are listed so it's not possible to make major changes, although our gardener does try to add in the occasional new plant to keep things interesting.

HOW DEEP IS THE SOIL?

The soil is only 1.5m deep at its deepest point, although it still manages to support over 80 full size trees!

WHAT SORT OF WILDLIFE DO YOU HAVE IN THE GARDENS?

The gardens are home to our four resident flamingos, Bill, Ben, Splosh and Pecks. They are Chilean flamingos and can withstand temperatures as cold as -14°C, ideal for our temperate climate! In the wild they feed on shrimp and other crustaceans which give them their beautiful

colouring. We give them a specially developed carotene-enriched diet to keep them pink – without this they'd turn grey! We also have 5 pairs of ornamental ducks; three of the dabbling variety – Carolina, Mandarin and Bahama Pintail, as well as two pairs of diving ducks – New Zealand Scaup and Pochard's variety. They all have pinioned wings to keep them within the safe confines of their unique habitat.

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THE ROOF GARDENS & BABYLON

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