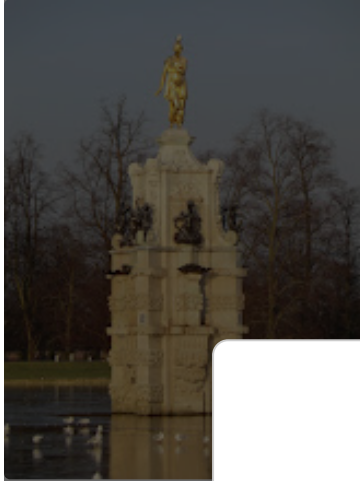




# Hampton Court Circular Walk

Two royal parks and Britain's finest surviving Tudor building.



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Consent

Manage options

## Length

## OS Map

## Toughness

## Features

This walk explores the two royal parks next to **Hampton Court Palace**. This was originally built for Cardinal Wolsey, but when he fell out of favour in 1529 it passed to Henry VIII and was enlarged into a royal palace. At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>C it was again greatly extended by William III & Mary II, who grafted a completely new baroque palace onto the Tudor buildings as well as redesigning the surrounding parkland (but not perfectly: the king was fatally injured by a fall when his horse stumbled on an ant hill).

After a short stretch past the palace on the Thames Path the walk enters **Home Park**, the local name for Hampton Court Park. It was originally enclosed as a hunting ground for Henry VIII and still contains a herd of fallow deer, but its appearance has changed significantly since Tudor times. The **Long Water** was added by Charles I and the three lime tree

avenues by William & Mary, completing its transformation into parkland typical of the 17<sup>th</sup>C baroque period.

The walk leaves Home Park at Kingston Gate and crosses the A308 to enter the larger **Bushy Park**. This too started as a royal hunting ground and has had a similar evolution into more formal parkland. Its many water features were the result of Charles I ordering the construction of the Longford River to bring fresh water from the River Colne to Hampton Court Palace. In the 20<sup>th</sup>C two attractive plantations were created along the course of the river and the walk goes through these **Woodland Gardens** to another reminder of the park's baroque history, the restored **Water Gardens** (closed on Mondays, or the Tuesday following a Bank Holiday Monday). It then loops back through the centre of the park and goes alongside part of the mile-long **Chestnut Avenue** (with the iconic **Diana Fountain** as its centrepiece) to Hampton Court Gate, opposite the palace's **Lion Gates**. If you have scheduled this walk on an **Open Day** (see below) you will be

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**Access to the Palace Gardens**

**Access to Home Park**






**Walk Options**

Shortcuts during

There are many short cuts which you could take in Bushy Park, most drastically by omitting the entire 4 km loop out to the Water Gardens. Conversely, there are several ways of lengthening the walk slightly. In particular it is worth exploring the many attractive little paths inside the Woodland Gardens rather than taking the straightforward route through them described (for simplicity) in the directions.

There are bus routes along the roads around Bushy Park (but none through it), so head for the nearest gate if you want to abandon the walk in the middle.

**Transport** There is a half-hourly service between Waterloo and Hampton Court (in TfL Zone 6), taking 36 minutes. Hampton Wick (also in Zone 6) is on the Kingston loop line from Waterloo, with four trains per hour (two on

25/03/2025, 03:17	Hampton Court Circular Walk
	<p>Sundays) taking 30-35 minutes via Wimbledon; those via Richmond take around ten minutes longer.</p> <p>If you want to arrive in style (if not speedily) there is a summer riverboat service from Westminster and Richmond to Hampton Court.</p> <p>If driving, Hampton Court station car park costs around £8 Mon-Fri, £4 weekends &amp; BH (2025). There are free car parks inside Bushy Park but these fill up quickly in fine weather.</p>
<b>Suggested Train</b>	<p>If you are planning to have lunch midway through the Main Walk at the café in the centre of Bushy Park, take the train nearest to <b>10:30</b> from <b>Waterloo to Hampton Court</b>. There are several other lunch and tea places (see below) and in practice you could start all the walk options at any convenient time.</p>
<b>Lunch</b>	<p>The most convenient place to stop for lunch is the <b>Pheasantry café</b> (020-</p> <div data-bbox="280 712 1311 1523"><p>Welcome</p><p><b>This site asks for consent to use your data</b></p><div><div> Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development</div><div> Store and/or access information on a device</div></div><p>Your personal data will be processed and information from your device (cookies, unique identifiers, and other device data) may be stored by, accessed by and shared with <a href="#">132 TCF vendor(s)</a> and <a href="#">65 ad partner(s)</a>, or used specifically by this site or app.</p><p>Some vendors may process your personal data on the basis of legitimate interest, which you can object to by managing your options below. Look for a link at the bottom of this page to manage or withdraw consent in privacy and cookie settings.</p><div><div></div><div></div></div></div>
<b>Tea</b>	<p>When you pass the main station, independent small station</p> <p>...ent stops at the Hampton</p> <p><b>Wick</b></p>
<b>Help Us!</b>	<p>After the walk, please leave a comment, it really helps. Thanks!</p> <p>You can also upload photos to the   SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  <b>Youtube</b>. This walk's tags are:</p>
<b>By Car</b>	<b>Start</b>
<b>Help</b>	<p>National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234</p>
<b>Version</b>	Mar-25 <b>Sean</b>
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# Walk Directions

## Walk Map

### Walk Map: Hampton Court Figure-of-8

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All maps © Op

## Walk Options

### M. Main Walk (12 km)

- a. Main Walk, finishing at Hampton Wick (13 $\frac{1}{4}$  km)
- b. Short Circular Walk, from Hampton Wick (9 $\frac{3}{4}$  km)

## Walk Directions

*If you are doing the Short Circular Walk (from Hampton Wick), start at [10] in §B.*

## Hampton Court Park

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8. Follow the grassy path up to the right-hand side of the long Hampton Wick Pond and continue alongside it. At the end keep ahead and leave the park through **Kingston Gate**, passing the (closed) Old Kings Head pub on your left.

9. Unless you want to investigate other pubs in Hampton Wick, cross the A308 carefully at the traffic lights and go up Church Grove to the pedestrian crossing by St John's church, where there is a gate in the park wall on the left.

- To detour through Hampton Wick turn right onto the A308, go over the pedestrian crossing and keep left at the roundabout into its High Street. The **White Hart Hotel** is by the roundabout, **The Swan** on the right at the junction with Lower Teddington Road and the **Foresters Arms** at the junction with Park Road and St John's Road. Go to the end of St John's Road to rejoin the main route at [11].

## B. Hampton Wick to the Pheasantry Plantation (2¼ • 2¾ km)

### Bushy Park (E)

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## 15. At the end of the canal veer right and left to continue alongside Heron Pond, initially on a surfaced path and then on a potentially muddy path by the water's edge.

## 16. Follow the path round to the right to continue alongside the Model Boating Pond. At the end of this second pond keep ahead on a grassy path alongside a narrow water channel.

## 17. At the end of the channel *turn half-left* and make your way across the grass towards a cast-iron water pump and **Chestnut Avenue**, the main road through the park (but now closed to through traffic).

*The mile-long avenue was conceived by Sir Christopher Wren as a grand formal approach to Hampton Court Palace. It is flanked on both sides by a row of horse chestnuts and several rows of lime trees.*

18. Go straight across the avenue and head for a pedestrian gate in the boundary fence around the **Woodland Gardens**, about 100m to the left of a vehicle entrance from the main road.
- This area was originally fenced off in 1823 to protect a new plantation of oak trees from the deer. The gardens were developed by the Park Superintendent in 1947, with informal clumps of rhododendrons and azaleas around a channel of the Longford River. They consist of two enclosures separated by a narrow strip of parkland, Ash Walk.*
19. Go through the gate into the first enclosure, the **Pheasantry Plantation**. If you want to visit the **Pheasantry café**, bear right to cross the stream at Crocodile Bridge and follow the path up to the building.
- If you are not visiting the café you could turn left instead of crossing the bridge, going directly onto the main path through the plantation.

### C. The Plantation to the Water Gardens and back (4 km)

#### Bushy Park (W)

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20. Make your way to the **Waterhouse Café** (marked on the map as **W**). From the café, follow the path down to the stream, cross a stream at Crocodile Bridge and follow the path up to the building.
21. Where the path crosses the stream, turn right (alongside Keeper's River). All routes lead to a gate at the western end of the plantation.
22. Go out through this gate, straight across Ash Walk and through another gate into the second enclosure, the **Waterhouse Plantation**.



23. For the simplest route keep right at the first two path junctions to head roughly **NW** on the main path for 300m, then turn right at a T-junction to head **N** for 350m on a long straight path.

- a. For a more interesting route (using the map) you could detour off to the left and make your way around Fisher's Pond to the larger Waterhouse Pond (with a small brick building on its far side, the Water House).  
*In a glade to the north of Waterhouse Pond, the **Canadian Totem Pole** was erected in 1992 to commemorate the country's links with Bushy Park. Upper Lodge was used as a convalescent hospital for Canadian troops in WWI.*
- b. Paths zig-zagging **W** and **N** alongside the Longford River allow for further detours off the main path. 250m north of Waterhouse Pond there is a striking avenue of hornbeams connecting the two routes.  
*The trees are a cultivar (*Fastigiata*) with upward-pointing branches creating a 'cathedral' effect.*

24. At its northern end leave the plantation through a gate and **turn right**. Go out through another gate into the parkland and **turn left** onto a broad grassy path heading **N**, with a fence on your left

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29. After it curves right to head **S**, the simplest route is to follow the lane (which becomes Cobbler's Walk) through the park, gradually curving left and coming to a seasonal car park on the right after 1 km.

- a. Alternatively (again using the map) you could bear left off the lane onto a faint grassy path, which in 150m goes past the right-hand end of the tree-lined **Canal Plantation**.  
*The white buildings in the distance are part of the **National Physical Laboratory** (NPL), the national measurement standards laboratory for the UK. They were constructed between 1998 and 2007.*
- b. You can continue on more grassy paths roughly parallel to the lane, off to the right. You would pass to the right of a house (Barton's Cottage) after 300m and later bear right in front of a wood to rejoin Cobbler's Walk by the car park.

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30. Take the broad grassy path heading **SSE** from the far end of the car park, heading for a pedestrian gate in the wooden fence 300m away (well to the right of a more prominent vehicle entrance).

*The large house which comes into view behind you is **Bushy House** (originally Lower Lodge). This former hunting lodge became the original site of the NPL in 1900 and is still part of the organisation.*

31. Go through this gate to re-enter the Pheasantry Plantation. Inside the gardens the left-hand path leads past Mediterranean Mound to the **Pheasantry café**.
- If you are not visiting the café you could take the other path up to the ponds and across Duck Bridge, then turn left at the T-junction to reach the gate by Crocodile Bridge.
- If you are doing the alternative ending (to Hampton Wick), go to **SE**.*

#### D. The Plantation to Hampton Court Station (1¾ • 5¼ km)

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34. Head **S** down the **Hampton Court Gate**, with the imposing **Lion Gates** of **Hampton Court Palace** across the A308 (Hampton Court Road).  
*The Portland stone piers and wrought-iron gates were designed by Wren in the reign of Queen Anne and her successor, George I.*
- The Lion Gates are normally closed, even on an Open Day. But if entry into the palace grounds is possible you could cross the A308 at the pedestrian crossing and pick up the suggested tour of the gardens at [37·d] below.
35. At other times turn right onto the A308. Follow the main road round a sharp left-hand bend, where you could move onto Hampton Court Green if you want to get slightly away from the traffic.

36. Before you reach the roundabout ahead cross the busy main road to the palace side via one of the pedestrian crossings. Just past the roundabout you come to **Trophy Gate**, the main entry point for **Hampton Court Palace**.

*The suggested route below takes in the main sights of the palace gardens but it is of course only possible on an Open Day (unless you buy an entrance ticket).*

### 37. Suggested tour of Hampton Court Gardens (up to 3½ km)

- Go up the main avenue towards the great **Gatehouse** into the Tudor palace, its entrance flanked by the **King's Beasts**.  
*These ten statues of heraldic animals (lions, dragons, unicorns, etc) represent the ancestry of Henry VIII and his third wife, Jane Seymour.*
- In front of the palace turn left onto a path leading into the gardens. Keep ahead past the **Rose Garden** on your left, then turn right through a gap in the high brick wall into a corner of the **Wilderness**.
  - You will be returning this way and so will have a chance to explore this area (and visit the Tiltyard Café, which is straight ahead) on your way out.
- Turn left onto the path along the western edge of the Wilderness. Halfway along turn half-right onto the path along the eastern edge of the Wilderness. *The Wilderness is not unlike a vast park, but unlike the normal park, it is a wilderness.*
- From the end of the path turn left to the end of the path. *Use the path to the end of the path for the return journey.*
- Inside the Palace turn left onto a path leading into the gardens. *Walk, in a straight line, to the end of the path.*
- At the end of the path turn left to the end of the path. *This path leads to the end of the path, where there is a building containing the Great Vine.*
- At the end of the path turn left to the end of the path. *The Palace has changed its appearance since its original appearance in 1995.*
- Go straight on to the end of the path. *Continue past the Pond and the end of the path.*
- Continue up to the end, where there is a building containing the **Great Vine**.  
*The vine was planted in 1768 for George III and still produces a large crop of dessert grapes in late summer.*
- Return along the other side of the sunken gardens, passing the **Banqueting House** on your right.  
*This is still used for banquets and similar events and is not normally open to the public.*
- Go through a gap in the hedge and bear right onto a raised path along the side of the Privy Garden, going down to the far end to see the **Tijou Screen** (which you saw from the riverside path near the start of the walk).  
*The elaborate wrought-iron screen was designed by Jean Tijou, a French Huguenot ironworker, in the 1690s.*

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- l. Take any route back through the Privy Garden and turn right in front of the palace to return to the Broad Walk.
- m. Turn left to go between the **East Front** and the Great Fountain Garden. Shortly before reaching the exit you pass the indoor **Royal Tennis Court**.  
*If open, you might be able to watch a game of **real tennis** (from which lawn tennis is derived) from a gallery alongside the court.*
- n. Outside the formal gardens go all the way along the southern edge of the Wilderness. Go out through the gap in the wall and turn right to come to the **Tiltyard Café**.  
*As the name indicates this part of the grounds was used for jousting in Tudor times; above the café is the one surviving brick tower used by spectators. William III later divided the Tiltyard into the Kitchen Garden, Rose Garden, etc.*
- o. Make your way from the café to the path alongside the high brick wall on the far side and turn left. In the corner of this enclosure the **Rose Garden** is straight ahead and the **Kitchen Garden** is on your right.  
*The latter has been planted with vegetables, fruit and flowers typical of an 18<sup>th</sup>C kitchen garden.*
- p. Make your way out through the Rose Garden and back into the main forecourt, passing the Tudor **Gatehouse** on your left.
- q. Leave the main forecourt and walk onto Barge Walk.

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38. To complete the walk, refresh the page.
- If you have any questions, please contact us at [inns@walkingclub.org.uk](#) in East London.

## E. The Plantation

### Bushy Park

39. From the main forecourt, walk through the gate and onto a broad grassy path heading north.
40. In 350m the path goes up a small bank where the Longford River flows into a culvert. **Bear left** to follow the curve of Chestnut Avenue around the **Diana Fountain**.  
*The Royal Parks controversially maintain that the bronze statue (gilded in its 2009 restoration) actually represents the nymph Arethusa rather than the Roman goddess of hunting. It was commissioned by Charles I from Le Sueur in 1637 and originally stood at Somerset House. It was later moved to the Privy Garden at Hampton Court before being installed as the centrepiece of Wren's grand Chestnut Avenue in 1713.*
41. Cross Chestnut Avenue carefully near the traffic circle and head **E** on an access road, passing a children's playground and later toilets on the right. For the shortest route, follow this track all the way along the southern edge of the park.
  - About 200m after passing the toilets you could bear left onto a grassy path which curves right to run parallel to the main track. If you take this small detour, bear right at an oblique path junction 75m before reaching a cricket ground to rejoin the track.

42. At the end of the parkland go through a gate and retrace your morning route along Church Grove Passage. Leave Bushy Park through **Church Grove Gate**, cross the road and continue on St John's Road opposite.
43. St John's Road leads into Park Road near its junction with Hampton Wick's High Street, with the **Foresters Arms** on the corner.
44. The station is 200m off to the left on the other side of the High Street, so use the pedestrian lights near the pub or outside the station to cross the main road.

» *Last updated: March 24, 2025*

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