

Explore Hampton Court Palace and Legoland with all the family



How long do I need? Two to three days

Where is it? Surrey and Windsor

Highlights

For a great family break, you need plenty to keep the whole party amused. Hampton Court Palace and Legoland both make an amazing day out, with plenty of attractions and rides to keep everyone in the family happy. If you have any energy left on day three you can visit Mercedes-Benz World museum – great for motor enthusiasts! Get behind the wheel of Mercedes-Benz, recapture the do-or-die spirit of Brookland's 1930s motor circuit and tour G-BBDG - the 1,350 mph Delta Golf Concorde.

Day one:

Spend the day at [Hampton Court Palace](#) beside the River Thames

The majestic highlight of the first day is a visit to Henry VIII's Hampton Court Palace, in its splendid setting beside the River Thames. This magnificent palace both awes and entertains its visitors, just as it did in Tudor times. Henry took the riverside residence from his fallen favourite, Cardinal Wolsey, and held court here in the series of rooms which we can still see today. Family trails, costumed guided tours and a variety of special activities rekindle the spirit of what life was like here under England's most colourful, much-married monarch. It's easy to picture Henry himself in the imposing Great Hall used for banquets, receptions, balls and other functions; in The Great Watching Chamber, where bodyguards were stationed to manage the ebb and flow of courtiers; in the Chapel Royal where he worshipped every day and in the sometimes chilling Haunted Gallery. The extra "presence" here could be poor Catherine Howard, Henry's fifth wife, who was dragged screaming from the Gallery after pleading with the king for her life. There's a cosier feel to the vast Tudor kitchens, built in 1530 to feed the 600 or so members of the court who were entitled to eat at the palace twice a day. Hampton Court's six acres of buildings span 500 years, so there's plenty more to

come. In the 17th century, William III and Queen Mary commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to rebuild the palace; Wren wanted to demolish all but the Great Hall, but had to be content instead with creating the wonderful series of State Apartments which we can visit, but the King and Queen did not live to enjoy. With the famous maze, wonderful formal gardens and 700-acre deer park, the grounds of the palace are an outing in themselves. The maze alone consists of half a mile of baffling paths: allow about 20 minutes to reach the centre.

Hampton Court Palace is located on the A308 and is well signposted from all the major local roads; there is limited parking at the palace. Trains from London Waterloo run twice an hour, journey time 35 minutes. Westminster Passenger Services (tel: +44 (0)207 9302062) operate riverboats in the summer from Westminster, Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames. Turks Launches (tel: +44 (0)208 5462434) operate services from Richmond and Kingston.

Hampton Court Palace

East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9AU

Opening hours: daily, except December 24-26 inclusive; mid-March - mid-October, 9.30 – 18.00 (10.15 on Mondays); mid-October - mid-March, 9.30 - 16.30 (10.15 on Mondays)

Costs: Admission costs vary – see website for details

Tel: +44 (0)870 7527777

Web: www.hrp.org.uk

Spend the night at the family-friendly [runnymede-on-thames hotel](#)

Check in for the night (or more) at the family-friendly runnymede-on-thames hotel, which has an excellent location on the banks of the river beside Bell Weir Lock. The hotel knows how to make young guests feel at home, with attention to detail which ranges from a children's playground and splash pool to milk and cookies at bedtime or bags of bread to feed the ducks. Facilities include an outdoor pool, fitness spa, tennis courts and games of giant Jenga, chess and croquet. Check out special offers, which can include discounts for entry to Thorpe Park and LEGOLand Windsor. The hotel is situated 15 miles from Hampton Court at Egham, off the A308 Windsor Road.

The runnymede-on-thames Hotel & Spa

Windsor Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 0AG

Opening hours: Open all year round

Costs: Room rates vary, see website for details

Tel: +44 (0)1784 220960

Web: www.runnymedehotel.com

Tea and the Magna Carta at Runnymede

It was at Runnymede, in 1215, that the Magna Carta was sealed by King John – the historic Great Charter of English liberty which limited the monarch's high-handed behaviour. This momentous occasion is marked by a memorial in the lovely natural landscape of Runnymede Meadow, on a slope above the River Thames. The memorial to President John F Kennedy is close by and the Air Forces Memorial, which commemorates airmen of the Second World War, is at the top of the slope. You can walk to the memorials from the hotel in about 25 minutes, following the

[Thames Path National Trail](#) along the river. The site is owned by the National Trust and can be visited all the year round, free of charge. The Magna Carta Tea Room (not NT) is also open all year, except December 24 – 26. Opening times vary from 8.30 – 17.30 in summer to 9.00 – 16.30 in winter (11.00 – 15.00 on New Year's Day.)

Time to spare? Hire an electric boat for an hour, from private moorings at the runnymede-on-thames hotel. The covered boats seat six people, with plenty of room for a picnic basket. You can putter along the river for an hour without going through locks. If you decide to venture further, any necessary guidance is provided.

Day two:

Spend the day at [LEGOLand](#) in Windsor

The engrossing world of LEGOLand Windsor is tailor-made to suit families with children aged from two to 12. Its energetic mix keeps everyone busy with creative activities, stimulating entertainment and imaginative rides. Young visitors can drive their own LEGO car, steer a powered boat, design and test a virtual rocket racer or take off on an interactive helicopter flight. They can sit back and watch a puppet show, ride through a desert or fairy tale scenes, limber up in the pirates' training camp, SkyRide over Miniland or unravel the mysteries of a Viking maze. From the Crown Jewels to the Hall of Fame, the amazing LEGO models never lose their appeal. 35,000,000 bricks have been used to recreate famous places featured in Miniland alone. LEGOLand Windsor is just 6 1/2 miles from the runnymede-on-thames hotel and Spa, on the B3022 Windsor/Ascot road.

LEGOLand Windsor

Winkfield Road, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 4AY

Opening hours: Open most days from late March to the end of October, with some additional special days. Admission is typically from 9.30 or 10.00 to between 17.00 and 20.00 according to the time of year.

Costs: Tickets prices vary – see website for details

Tel: +44 (0)871 222 2001

Web: www.legoland.co.uk

Day three:

Visit [Mercedes-Benz World](#) and the birthplace of British motorsport and aviation

Here's a hands-on driving experience where youth is no barrier. If you are tall enough to reach the pedals of a Mercedes A-Class (at least 1.5m), you are old enough to drive at Mercedes-Benz World. The Kids' Driving Experience is one to get you started behind the wheel, with an experienced driver by your side. The Kids' 4x4 Experience is an action-packed off-road adventure around 10 acres of axle twisting terrain, driving one of the most advanced and prestigious off-road vehicles in the world. On this one, two passengers can go along for the ride. Book either Experience for 30 minutes or an hour, then take a walk round the exhibitions to get up close to the famous Gullwing and Maybach, learn more of the history of Mercedes-Benz and experience a simulated ride down the production line. Mercedes-Benz World is on the B374 just a few

minutes from Junction 10 of the M25 and A3 London – Portsmouth road. It is also less than one mile from Weybridge station, on the London Waterloo and Woking Line.

Mercedes-Benz World

Brooklands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0SL.

Opening hours: Open daily from 10.00 - 18.00

Costs: Ticket costs vary – see website for details. Admission to the exhibition (with café and restaurant) is free.

Tel: +44 (0)1932 373707

Web: www.mercedes-benz.co.uk/world

Relive the stylish, glory days of motor racing and aviation at the [Brooklands Museum](#), which occupies 30 acres of the original motor racing circuit. From the Edwardian Clubhouse to the Motoring Village, both fully restored, the museum is dedicated to keeping that unbeatable 'Spirit of Brooklands' alive. You can trace the story of the Brooklands Circuit, see some of the legendary cars that raced here and visit the hangars that house over 30 historic aircraft. These include the recently restored 'Delta-Golf' Concorde, the fastest production Concorde and the first aircraft ever to carry 100 people at twice the speed of sound. Buy a timed ticket for the Concorde Experience to tour the aircraft and take your seat for a virtual flight. There is a café in the museum, open for breakfast, lunch and snacks. The museum entrance is via Mercedes-Benz World.

Brooklands Museum

Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0QN

Opening hours: Open daily excluding Christmas, 10.00 – 17.00 (16.00 in winter).

Costs: Adult £9.90, Senior Citizen/Student £8.80, Child (5-16) £6.05, Children under 5 free.

Tel: +44 (0)1932 857381

Web: www.brooklandsmuseum.com