

# A merry break in Marylebone

Immersive art, twinkling lights, shops galore and seasonal puds: this west London neighbourhood is a great base for a festive family weekend. **Words: Anna Evdokimou**

## DAY ONE

### Morning

Check into the sophisticated Hyatt Regency London — The Churchill, just a short walk away from Oxford Street, and spent some time admiring the bespoke subtleties that pay homage to Sir Winston Churchill. From the foyer's grand piano and marble pillars to the shimmering chandeliers, the hotel's refined touches truly radiate luxury. The spacious rooms and suites make it the perfect base for a family break (there will even be a delightful cuddly toy version of Churchill's beloved cat, Jock, in the kids' room). After you've settled in, stroll over to Selfridges and browse the new Christmas shop, where a wonderland of baubles, crackers and stocking fillers await.

### Afternoon

As the shopping hordes of Oxford Street grow, take some well-deserved respite from the festive chaos and head over to the Wallace Collection in Hertford House, a six-minute walk away. Free to visit, it's home to 18th-century French paintings, sculptures and Renaissance objects — while the museum itself has an inviting, ornate red and gold interior. While you browse through all the bling,

the kids will be amazed by the striking armoury and shields on display. Before you head back to the hotel, stop by the glass-roofed courtyard of the Wallace Collection and delve into an apple crumble tart with caramel cinnamon ice cream. Spoiler alert: it's divine.

### Evening

After all that walking, you're not going to want to travel far for your dinner. Simply head down to the hotel's signature restaurant, The Montagu Kitchen & Lounge, for an evening of culinary delights. As Churchill said, "I am easily satisfied with the very best", and that's the eatery's exact ethos. The showstopper here is the theatrical open kitchen, in which you can observe the chefs as they meticulously craft your feast. Be sure to leave room for dessert, as the pumpkin and maple mousse tastes like Christmas in a mouthful. End your evening with a stroll back to Oxford Street, as it would be a sin not to admire London's flagship Christmas lights at night.

## DAY TWO

### Morning

If you're a fitness fanatic, start your day with a run around Marylebone's quaint city streets. At Tracksmith, a retail store and community hub for runners, free runs and events are



organised weekly — perfect for those who are in the city for a short time (visit its website for times). If walking is more your family's speed, follow the warm light emanating from Daunt Books and make your way through the buzzing crowd. Head to the back of the ground floor to find the children's section. Afterwards, wander over to Rococo Chocolates for a hot chocolate topped with whipped cream: its warmth will help alleviate the cold of a British winter.

### Afternoon

If there's a single venue in the capital that demonstrates the power of immersive art, it's Frameless. A five-minute cab ride from Marylebone High Street, the gallery uses technology to enhance the complexities and beauty of historic masterpieces, from Salvador Dalí's *The Scream* to Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Both adults and children alike will be in awe of the projection of colours and

landscapes that spill onto the floors and walls, completely immersing you in the art.

### Evening

After a brief respite in the room to recharge your batteries, head down to the decadent Churchill Bar & Terrace, in which you can pull up an armchair and warm your bones by the roaring fireplace. While you indulge in a craft cocktail or two (the autumnal-inspired Longitude 40° is a must), the kids can snack on tasty flatbreads, burger sliders or a homely toastie. No weekend in London is complete without a glitzy performance, so make your way on over to the Dominion Theatre and enjoy a musical rendition of *Elf* (15 November – 6 January 2024) to put a merry end to your Yuletide break.

## TIME TO SPARE?

Walk over to La Fromagerie on Moxon Street and pick up some artisan and farmhouse cheeses, sourced from around the world. The expert cheesemongers will recommend the best options for your Christmas cheeseboard, as well as which cider or wine to pair it with. On your way out, stop by the outdoor grill for an edam or cheddar toastie to help heat you up.

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