

Why Notting Hill, London, is one of the best places to live

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Notting Hill may never shake off its association with foppishly fringed Hugh Grant, but it is winning fresh plaudits for the groaning smorgasbord of new or revamped pubs and restaurants that have opened in the past 12 months.

Say, “Oui, chef” to Caia, the Pelican, Kuro Eatery, Dorian, Princess Royal, Straker’s, opened by social media sensation Thomas Straker, and share the local love for Palestinian food at Akub in Hillgate Village, a pretty enclave near the Tube station where pastel-painted period homes are interspersed with yet more destination dining spots. These include the pan-Pacific Los Mochis and two Greek options, Mazi and Suzi Tros. For special occasions eat at Clare Smyth’s Core, which has three Michelin stars, or the Ledbury, a local institution that reopened early last year.

Although bankers and tech bros now outnumber bohos, and the stucco-fronted family houses here change hands for eight-figure sums, Notting Hill retains a relaxed, liveable feel that’s absent from other parts of prime London. It might be off limits for first-timers who can’t draw on the bank of high-net-worth Mum and Dad, but there’s plenty to tempt downsizers from the capital’s swankier suburbs.

There’s a wealth of culture on the doorstep, from arthouse movies at the Gate and Electric cinemas, and international theatre and dance at the grade II listed Coronet, to open-air arias at Opera Holland Park and gigs at the Notting Hill Arts Club. Then, of course, there’s the Notting Hill Carnival, a celebration of

Caribbean culture that brings steel pans, flamboyant parade floats and stonking sound systems to the neighbourhood in August.

Mind, body and soul are catered for at swanky gyms such as Bodyism, Psytle and SoulCycle, but for a more soothing sesh, head to Love Supreme Projects, a yoga studio in Stella McCartney's old HQ on Golborne Road. If you like your exercise to be old-school, go walking or cycling in Holland Park, Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, or dip into the Serpentine Lido. However, you might struggle to recreate Hugh Grant's all-seasons strolling through Notting Hill's world-famous market because it's heaving with tourists whenever there's a hint of fine weather.

Notting Hill Gate is your port of call for all things practical: Tesco, Little Waitrose, M&S, banks and pharmacies. Tourist hordes and often exorbitant prices have dented the appeal of Portobello Road, but there are treasures on its side streets, from the original Rough Trade Records store to the self-explanatory Spice Shop and Books for Cooks. Westbourne Grove is lined with upmarket chains (Diptyque, Me+Em, Smythson) and is increasingly a foodie haven: pick up handmade pastries, pies, tarts and biscuits at Sally Clarke, pesticide-free fruit and veg at Daylesford Organics, and sushi, seafood or steak at the Notting Hill Fish and Meat shop, where slabs of tuna, live lobsters and dry-ageing sides of beef take pride of place in the windows.

Where can I travel to?

Notting Hill Gate Tube station offers Central, Circle and District line services to Paddington (4 minutes, for trains to Heathrow), Bond Street (7 minutes), Westminster (14 minutes) and Bank (21 minutes).

How fast is the broadband?

The vast majority of homes have Virgin Media cable broadband and one of the following full fibre networks, Hyperoptic, G.network or Community Fibre.

Three primary schools are rated “outstanding” by Ofsted: Colville, Fox and Thomas Jones. The trio are among the 40 best primaries in the country, according to the [Sunday Times Parent Power guide](#), with Fox ranked eighth nationwide. “Outstanding” state secondaries include Kensington Aldridge Academy and a brace of Roman Catholic options a little further afield, the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial RC School (boys) and Sacred Heart High School (girls). Notting Hill is also within striking distance of St Paul’s Girls’ School (£9,264 per term), which sits at the top of the Parent Power league table for independent secondaries.

Entry level in Notting Hill is £650,000, which should buy a one-bedroom flat. Three-bedroom houses start at about £2 million, while homes on Kensington Park Road, Talbot Road or Westbourne Grove go for between £5 million and £6 million. At the top end of the market, £20 million price tags are not unheard of on Lansdowne Crescent, Elgin Crescent, Pembridge Square and Ladbroke Square.

What are the house prices in Notting Hill?

Average property price: £1.18 million

Source: Halifax using Land Registry data

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