

Gourmet Special

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# An afternoon tea at the Mandarin Oriental London

*Oh the weather outside is  
frightful  
But the fire is so delightful...  
So make the Mandarin Oriental  
your special place to go!*

By Monica Kapila

Borrowed lyrics from the classic Dean Martin song I know but despite being written 70 years ago, the sentiment was very applicable on a cold, December afternoon in London's Knightsbridge! After a tour of the Saatchi Gallery in the Duke of York's square, a wintery walk down Sloane Street and a whirlwind shop at Harrods we were more than ready for our afternoon tea at the Mandarin Oriental opposite Harvey Nichols!

Entering up a Narnia land Snow Queen's staircase we were ushered into the warmth of the elegant fireside of the Rosebery lounge where tea was to be taken. The feeling inside couldn't be more different to the crisp, wintery weather that was gathering force outside! We were instantly enveloped in the oranges and reds of fresh amaryllis flowers, gentle fires and even more genteel folk exchanging animated Christmas anecdotes. Welcome to a magical world. Thankfully our table was set up as I would have struggled to decide which vantage point to sit at. Right by the fire, or at the window seat looking straight out onto the Christmas Glam rock windows compete with psychedelic gangsters in hoodies and sunglasses.

The Rosebery's Harrods Teddy Bear Afternoon Tea comprised of the highest quality sandwiches, hand made pastries and fresh from the oven scones. While these are all traditional high tea items, each had a contemporary twist that elevated them way above the ordinary. I loved the rose petal jelly, and homemade lemon curd. The lemon curd was really lemony, fresh and creamy but not sweet at all and made a perfect accom-



*Crystal Apple stand DoinDubai*

paniment to the cranberry, raisin scones. And Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without turkey but how refreshing to have slow roasted Turkey with sage and cranberry in delicately rolled, finger sandwiches! The meat had a rich, deep taste to it that reminded us of succulent duck more than dry turkey! Smoked Salmon tartare with crème fraiche and dill was another favourite at our table, as was the goat's cheese with roasted pumpkin and red onion confit. And if you were feeling particularly partial to anything, you could just order it again for no extra charge!

The figgy pudding bauble was a very novel and well thought out idea but all our party loved the little pumpkin and pecan iced cakes too. But the Mandarin seems to be all about maintaining traditions with modern accents! A case in point were the beautiful but very functional stands that held our tea plates on one side and in so doing

didn't obstruct any of the diners' views of each other! Well done MO! The amberish, crystal balls on top added to the elegance of the stands and somehow blended in perfectly with the rest of the bone china table settings.

And to drink? As if seven categories of fine teas were not enough to choose from, you could always select a blend from the rare or limited tea for an extra three to four pounds. Drink some whole rose bud tea to complement your rose petal jam and don't worry there isn't any caffeine in this concoction! But if coffee is more your thing, then choose from any of the ten types of coffee; thanks for making the distinction between French Press and Drip Filter for us. And then try and drip filter your memories of this special place in London for as long as you can. Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!



*Suspended Sandwiches DoinDubai*



*Jams Lemon Curd DoinDubai*



*Cakes on stand DoinDubai*