

I couldn't wait to get stuck in



Clot a treat!

As my mum and I exited the train station, we peered up the road. 'Danielle, it must be here,' Mum nodded as we went up Quay Street.

The Crown was handily located just a stone's throw away from Woodbridge railway station. It was convenient for those who'd hopped on a train to escape to more rural areas.

A jewel in the crown of the Suffolk countryside, Woodbridge was one of my favourite spots for a day out.

There was a plethora of cosy pubs, high-end eateries, shops and everything in between.

It makes for a perfect day out, I thought. And we were incredibly excited to check out The Crown's afternoon tea menu.

As we stepped inside, we marvelled at how elegantly modern the interiors were.

There were gentle nods to Woodbridge's riverside heritage throughout, including an overhead light fixture fashioned from an old wooden boat, and bird statues in the restaurant.

When we arrived, our waiter Euan took us to our table, and explained that our afternoon tea — crafted by MasterChef finalist Sci Daniels — would come out in three courses.

I was especially excited, as Sci Daniels was well-known across Suffolk for his experimental, fun and 'out there' menu offerings.

Once seated, we ordered our drinks. I went for a pot of tea, while Mum had a jug of coffee.

As we sipped, we looked over giddily as our first course arrived.

Aptly called Sandwiches and Whatnots, we couldn't wait to get stuck in, as we both

AFTERNOON TEAS WITH A TWIST

The Crown



loved our savouries.

Between us, we had two gin-cured cucumber finger sandwiches, two house-cured salmon mini bagels, creamed goat's cheese profiteroles, and mini croque monsieurs.

'Aw, these are so cute,' I said, as I quickly snapped some photos before we tucked in.

The mini croque monsieur was absolutely adorable, but the star of the show was the mini salmon bagel.

Euan then brought us our second course, which featured strawberry scones with clotted cream and, of course, Tiptree jam, along with two sausage rolls.

The sausage rolls were incredible and as someone who isn't usually a fan, I loved the scones too.

To round off our afternoon tea, we tucked into the The Sweeties course, which consisted of crown-shaped strawberry shortcake biscuits, Pimm's and basil fruit jelly, and a decadent berry cheesecake mille feuille.

By this point, we were incredibly full, but we somehow finished every last piece.

Each course was fantastic, fancy and filling.

'What more could you want?' I said to Mum, who readily agreed.

The price was great value, and the quirkiness of the food made the experience one I won't forget.

- **COST:** From £21pp. Must be pre-booked at least 24 hours in advance.
- **VISIT:** thecrownatwoodbridge.co.uk
- **LOCATION:** Woodbridge, Suffolk

Just my cuppa

As my boyfriend Lawrence and I wandered down a residential street, looking for K West Hotel & Spa, I suddenly spotted a shiny building among the houses.

'There it is!' I exclaimed. It felt like we'd uncovered a luxurious secret hideaway.

As we walked into the modern foyer, we were seated on a plush green sofa in a cosy corner of the restaurant.

All the furniture was velvet, which gave the room a chic feel.

'Safia, how romantic,' Lawrence smiled.

A waiter handed us a glass of prosecco each, to start off the Tippy Tea — its version of an afternoon tea.

As we sipped, the waiter came back with a small retro record-turntable.

'This is what the afternoon tea will be served on,' he said.

'Oh wow, that's so unique,' I said.

Then we were handed a glass teapot with our first cocktail.

We were told all the cocktails were made with different gin infusions, and based on the flavours of a classic afternoon tea.

'This one is the Victoria Sponge Mar-tea-ni,' the waiter said.

As I took a sip, I enjoyed the fruity, strawberry hints.

Then the main event was served — the mezze board.

There were no sandwiches in sight, but instead, a delicious array



K West Hotel & Spa

Swapping sandwiches for Scotch eggs, and cakes for cocktails, these unusual afternoon teas left *that's life!* writers Safia and Danielle wanting more...

of meats and cheeses.

Lawrence and I both picked a slice of Parma ham and put it on a pitta bread with Stilton on top — as I bit into it, my tastebuds were zinging.

We made our way through the board of delights, with everything from salami and brie, to apricots, nuts and honey.

'This definitely isn't your usual afternoon tea,' Lawrence chuckled.

We enjoyed every bite while sipping on the next two cocktails.

There was the Cucumber Sandwich Mar-tea-ni and a Strawberry Jam one.

'It's made with real jam,' the waiter told us.

I could tell, because the flavour was spot on.

I want to drink a whole teapot of this, I thought.

We were given a macaron each, which went perfectly with the fruity cocktails.

After we'd devoured everything, we took advantage of the delicious-looking dinner menu, and ordered a burger each.

As we walked out of the hotel, we felt like we'd been taken on a tasty rollercoaster of flavours.

The next day, I was still craving that jammy cocktail!

Pouring my cocktail from a teapot!



- **COST:** £59pp. Minimum two people per booking.
- **VISIT:** k-west.co.uk
- **LOCATION:** Shepherds Bush, London

Me and Lawrence with our afternoon tea



Lemon heaven

Driving up the rolling green hills, I almost went past the hotel's entrance, as it was camouflaged by the trees.

When we got out of the car, my boyfriend Lawrence and I were in awe of the surroundings.

'We're in the Cotswolds all right!' I said, looking at the beautiful view.

It set the tone for the country feel of the interior as we walked into the cosy reception of Burleigh Court Hotel.

As we were shown to our seats, I couldn't help noticing the neutral colours, and the wooden décor of the place gave it a homey feel.

'What would you like to drink?' asked the waitress.

'Lemon and ginger tea, please,' I replied.

Lawrence ordered the same, and as we waited for the tea to arrive, I enjoyed the calming music that was playing.

Minutes later, our afternoon tea was put in front of us, and my eyes lit up.

'Charcuterie?' I exclaimed.

In place of traditional finger sandwiches was a plate of picky bits including hams, scotch egg slices, crackers and olives.

Everything was flavoursome and much lighter on the stomach than sandwiches.

Now I have lots of room for the sweet treats, I thought.

On the plate of desserts, we each got a mini lemon meringue pie, chocolate delicie, choux bun and a macaron.

Lawrence and I picked up the pie to start, and as

we bit into it, our eyebrows shot up.

'Oh my God, it's amazing,' he said.

'I'm in lemon heaven,' I hummed in agreement.

The others were lovely, but the lemon meringue pie kept the top spot as our favourite of the desserts.

Next, the scones. I slathered on the jam and cream and noticed the slightly doughy texture of the scone itself.

It was perfect, and after a few bites, we asked for more cream and jam.

'It's never enough,' I giggled to the waitress.

After everything was devoured, we sat back and cradled our bellies.

We took a last sip of our lemon and ginger tea before admitting defeat.

We were well and truly full to the brim.

As we left and admired the green hills in the distance, Lawrence turned to me.

'I'm so stuffed, you'll have to roll me down them,' he laughed.

'Me too,' I chuckled.

Driving away from the picturesque Cotswolds, I vowed not to leave it too long before going back.



Burleigh Court Hotel

- **COST:** £25pp. Must be pre-booked at least 24 hours in advance.
- **VISIT:** burleighcourt.cotswolds.co.uk
- **LOCATION:** Stroud, Gloucestershire