Windsor Castle guide for visitors on the Autism spectrum

Arrivals and admission

The visitor entrance to Windsor Castle is at the top of Castle Hill on the right-hand side:

It is not the gateway on the left, which is the Castle exit:
At the Admission Centre there are four routes:

- Pre-paid tickets and vouchers
- Ticket sales
- Ticket holders
- Group ticket sales

If you wish to purchase a ticket join the queue for the next available till. The different ticket options are:

- Adult
- Over 60/student
- Disabled Person
- Under 17
- Under 5

If you, or someone in your party, are on the autism spectrum and find queuing difficult, please ask to speak to the Admissions Supervisor who may be able to arrange a quicker entrance time.

Tickets can also be purchased online at: http://tickets.rct.uk and sent to you in advance. If you choose to collect your tickets on the day you will still have to queue.

**Security Hall**

On arrival you must go through a security search. This security area is a bright, noisy space that can get busy and often involves queuing.

You must follow the instructions of the Wardens. You will be asked to put your bags through an x-ray machine and keys, coins, and mobile phones must be removed from pockets and put into your bag, or a tray which will be provided.

You will be asked to walk through a metal detecting arch. The arch makes a loud noise if it detects something metal. If that happens, staff will use a hand-held detector and wave it around your body to find out what set-off the alarm. The detector normally does not touch your body.

Due to building works currently taking place at the Castle there is a lot of background noise in the Security Hall.

**The Courtyard**

Once you have passed through security and collected your belongings you go outside via a large, bright tunnel. The tunnel is in place in a courtyard, to protect visitors from the building work that are taking place. The tunnel brings you out a little further up the hill. Here, on your right are temporary lavatories.

A little further up you can collect a Multimedia Tour from a temporary building on the left-hand side. The tour tells you about the history of the Castle, the role of The Queen and a number of the works of art displayed in the State Apartments. The tour uses audio and video. You can stop and restart the tour at any point. The tour lasts about 90 minutes. The device can be used with or without headphones. If used without, you should hold it like a mobile phone.

You can also wait for the next Precinct Tour, at the Meeting Point – there is a large, narrow sign. Tour departure times are listed. Tours are led by a uniformed warden and last about 30 minutes.
Getting to the State Apartments

As you walk up the hill you may encounter large groups of people and traffic. The site can be noisy and the Castle is under the flight path to Heathrow. You will pass the Jubilee Bandstand on the right:

Sometimes, during the summer months, a band plays here. Bench seating is provided around the Jubilee bandstand.

Middle Ward

Follow the road around the bottom of the Round Tower and you will enter the 'Middle Ward'. This can be a busy area with lots of tour groups, parked and moving vehicles.

At Middle Ward you have a number of options:

1. Middle Ward shop:

This shop can be busy during the summer months. There is a noisy heater over the entrance door, restricted space and lots of columns and mirrors. Tills are located in the centre, at the back of the shop, and on the right-hand side as you enter. A machine selling bottled water is located just inside on the left-hand side. This shop has the largest range of merchandise and a home delivery service is available. An online shop is available at [www.royalcollectionshop.co.uk](http://www.royalcollectionshop.co.uk)
2. St George’s Chapel:

St George’s Chapel is open daily, except on Sundays when it is open for worshippers only. Visitors are welcome to join services in the Chapel. The Chapel is entered via a heavy wooden door, which is often closed.

The Chapel has all the usual sensory hazards associated with religious buildings, stained glass; organ music; incense; echoes; noisy heaters; flickering lights; small, sometimes crowded spaces, and aisles.
The best time to visit is usually around 10am. You exit the Chapel into a small gift shop, located in the Chapel Cloisters.

This space can get crowded. You cannot walk around the Cloisters.

From the shop, the exit is through the large wooden door marked ‘Exit’. You will pass through a large porch area before exiting outside:

3. The Changing the Guard ceremony:

The ceremony takes place at 11:00 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. It never takes place on a Sunday. The ceremony lasts approximately 30 minutes and is accompanied by a military band.

Throughout the day the Guards on sentry duty change and smaller groups of Guards march within the Castle precincts. The Guards do not march around people; they expect the public to move out of their way and will shout ‘Make way for The Queen’s Guard’. If you hear this, you should move out of their way immediately.
The State Apartments:

Go through the gateway marked NORTH TERRACE and follow the route shown below:

North Terrace:

Visitors should be aware of the relatively low wall on the North Terrace which has a sheer drop down the hill on the other side.

To access the accessible lavatory or baby nappy-changing facilities here please ask a warden:

At the far end of the terrace there are more lavatory and baby nappy-changing facilities:

These can have an intense smell of air freshener. There are reflective surfaces, flickering overhead lights and noisy hand-driers.
There is currently building work taking place on the North Terrace, by the entrance to the State Apartments, which at times makes this a busy, noisy area.

During the summer months queues form on the North Terrace as people wait to go inside the Castle. If you, or someone in your party, are on the autism spectrum and finds queuing difficult, please speak to the warden on duty and they may be able to arrange a quicker entry.

**China Museum**

Before you reach the State Apartments you pass through the China Museum. It is here that you must leave any large bags (rucksacks, suitcases) and pushchairs. Baby carrying slings or hip seats are available to borrow for use during this part of the tour.

From here you go up the Grand Staircase into the State Apartments:
Please note there is currently building works taking place on the Grand Staircase and space and light may be restricted.

The State Apartments

The route through the State Apartments is one way. You should be aware of the following sensory elements:

- Lighting is mostly provided by antique fittings rather than modern fluorescent lighting.
- Heating is provided via hot air vents, which always make some background noise.
- The floorboards creak loudly in certain places.

Seating is available in every room on request. Ask a Warden if you would like to know where to sit down. In the event of an emergency evacuation, an alarm may sound and uniformed wardens will direct visitors out through the nearest emergency exit.
The tour proceeds as follows:

Grand Vestibule – spacious.

Waterloo Chamber – the entrance can get crowded.

St George’s Hall – large and spacious. Easy access out of the State Apartments (please ask a Warden).
Lantern Lobby – small, dark space.

Grand Reception Room

Garter Throne Room
Garter Ante Chamber – small dark space

King’s Drawing Room

King’s Bedchamber – small and often crowded
King’s Dressing Room – small and often crowded

King’s Closet – small and often crowded

Queen’s Drawing Room
King’s Dining Room – dark, no windows. Easy access from the State Apartments (please ask a warden)

Queen’s Gallery

Queen’s Audience Chamber – dark
Queen’s Presence Chamber – dark with noisy heaters near the windows

Queen’s Guard Chamber – easy access out of the State Apartments (please ask a warden)

You then re-enter the Grand Vestibule before heading downstairs and back past the cloakroom where you should collect any belongings you left, before going outside into Engine Court.
From October to the end of March the tour through the State Apartments also include the Semi-State Rooms, entered from the Lantern Lobby, as follows:

Crimson Drawing Room:

State Dining Room:

Octagon Dining Room:
China Corridor – very narrow:

From the China Corridor you join the visitor route in the Grand Reception Room and eventually exit into Engine Court.

**Engine Court**
Bench seating is available in Engine Court. The flooring is cobbled and uneven in places. There is another small shop here:

More accessible lavatories are located in Engine Court, to the right of the shop. Please ask a warden if you wish to use these but do not have a RADAR key.

From here you can return to Middle Ward via the gateway:

Exit

You exit via the Henry VIII Gate which is manned by armed police. Please return any multimedia tours at the green umbrella by the exit gate:

If you try to leave the Castle with your tour an alarm will sound as you walk through the gateway. A member of staff will ask you to return it.

If you bought your ticket directly from us, and you agree we can treat your purchase as a donation, you can convert it into a 1-Year Pass, giving 12 months free re-admission. Simply sign and print your name on the reverse of your ticket and ask a warden to stamp and validate it for you. You should then keep this ticket and bring it with you for future visits to the Castle.

Additional tours of the Castle

During August and September it is possible to purchase additional tickets to visit other areas of the Castle – the Great Kitchen or the Round Tower. These tours are additional to the standard visit detailed in this document and have a limited ticket availability. Tickets must be booked in advance, either via the website or from the Castle Admission Centre on the day of the visit.
For more information on these special tours and how to purchase a ticket, please contact the Specialist Sales team in our Ticket Office:

Call: +44 (0)20 7766 7324

E-mail specialistsales@rct.uk

If you have any feedback on this information, or any queries or concerns regarding a visit please contact:

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