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It's the busiest and funkiest square mile in the West End – and Soho is also laden with history. It's where London's artists and musicians have always made a beeline for – and today it offers the visitor the best dining and entertaining experience in town

To eat

Soho has everything, from high end dining to the cheap and cheerful.

From chains to independents, food from around the world, it's hardly surprising Londoners flock to the area for something to eat before a trip to the theatre, gig or nightclub – or as a night out in itself.

The list is extensive, and many have a no-booking policy, offering large shared communal tables.

Bar Italia (Greek Street) is a must – a traditional Italian coffee shop that has stood firm over the decades as Soho has become trendier and trendier – and while its coffees, pastries, sandwiches and meals are fantastic, it is also the best place in Soho to people watch. It stays open till the early hours, too.

Patisserie Valerie (Old Compton Street) also offers coffees and teas – and the best cakes in the neighbourhood.

For history, try the **Gay Hussar (Greek Street)**, a Hungarian eatery, used by the staff of Private Eye and politicians. On the same stretch, check out **10 (Greek Street)** for a menu that boasts the latest trends in modern British cuisine.

The newest Soho arrival is **La Paloma**



(Rupert Street). Opened last year, it serves up contemporary Middle Eastern fare. It has a great atmosphere and chefs who seem to dance as they cook in their publicly accessible kitchen.

To see

The streets of Soho are a continuous piece of theatre. From watching the movers and shakers of the London film and fashion world go about their daily business, to checking out the funky styles of the people who live in and frequent the neighbourhood, there is enough people watching to mean a pavement table provides more than enough to keep one occupied.

Being in the heart of Theatreland, the top West End shows are on your doorstep, while the pubs are the best London has to offer.



The Coach and Horses (Greek Street) – the pub where Peter Cook and Dudley Moore drank lunchtime pints – is always busy, and in the evenings features a piano player who knocks out literally any tune the crowd fancy singing along to.



Ronnie Scott's (Frith Street) is perhaps the best jazz club in London and, as well as having a solid mix of both trad and

modern jazz, it features renowned acts from around the world. You can get a table with food and drink, or hang at the bar.

Pizza Express (Dean Street) is more than an outlet of the popular chain – it was where the Pizza Express story started. It features a club in the basement, where you can turn up, get a pizza and listen to performers.

To stay

The latest hotel to open has become a must-visit for those who know Soho. **The Z Hotel (Old Compton Street)** is a brilliant conversion of 12 Georgian town houses. The rooms are neat and practical, and you couldn't want for a more central location.



To cap it off, the ground floor bar has a special event for guests every night. It features a vast array of artisan cheeses and nibbles to peck on, and glasses of a selection from

the wine cellar to quaff – all included in the price of the room. A lovely way to start your evening off. ■

