A LITTLE TIME FOR TWO



A detail in a Christmas window, spotted by two people. · Editorial illustration

When I stayed with my friend in Pimlico, he knew London well enough to book the table before we went out. We ate at the Ritz. We went to concerts. I remember his company more clearly than I remember what either of us ordered.

That's the pleasure I had in mind for Piccadilly. One of you spots something tiny in a Christmas window. The other comes closer. Somewhere upstairs there's a table with your names on it, so you can stay for another look.

I'd give the afternoon to that one stretch of London. A pot of tea for two is a fine reason to stop.

Desmond

Desmond Andrew McPartland

START WITH THE POT



A scone, a spoonful of preserve and a fragrant pot of tea. · Editorial illustration

The 2026 festive menu makes a good argument for tea before Champagne. The Christmas blend has clementine, cocoa and spice. If one of you usually drinks a brisk breakfast tea, ask the server to help you each choose a pot.

I'd start with the smoked trout sandwich, then move to a warm scone while the clotted cream is still cool. The mandarin mousse and little mincemeat tart are the two sweets I'd save room for. If you rarely linger over tea together at home, allow the whole sitting here.

Open the 2026 festive Classic Afternoon Tea menu