Headline: It’s good to be king at regal residences

Deckhead: Take a peek inside Britain’s favorite royal haunts; see history

Have you ever wondered how Princess Diana lived, or where Henry VIII shared quality time with his six wives?

The private homes and haunts of Britain’s royal family are not as private as you might think. Many are open to the public. Have a look inside some of Britain’s most celebrated royal residences and attractions and make yourself at home.

One of Britain’s most recognizable landmarks, *Buckingham Palace,* is the official residence of the King. Every August and September, His Majesty opens his home to visitors, giving you the chance to tour the lavish State Rooms and Garden. You’ll also see incredible treasures from the Royal Collection along the way. And don’t forget to catch the spectacular *Changing of the Guard* ceremony — daily from May to July, and on alternative days for the rest of the year.

***Kensington Palace***has been home to many members of the Royal Family, including Queen Victoria, Diana, Princess of Wales, and now the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. It was also the birthplace and childhood home of Queen Victoria, who turned 200 last year. Kensington Palace celebrated in style by adding a pair of permanent exhibitions. *Victoria: A Royal Childhood* is a reimagined visitor route through the State Rooms, where the princess spent her formative years. *Victoria: Woman and Crown* in the Piggott gallery examines her later life and legacy.

***Hampton Court Palace***, about 35 minutes south of London, illustrates the magnificence of the Tudor era. Step back in time for a taste of Tudor life in Henry VIII’s kitchens or lose yourself in the famous Hampton Court Maze. The Hampton Court gardens are internationally renowned for being among the most beautiful in the world.

With a stunning ceiling painted by Rubens in 1635, *Banqueting House* at Whitehall, is all that remains of the 1,500-room Whitehall Palace, home of British monarchs from 1530 until 1698. In 1649, King Charles I was executed on a scaffold built outside the building.

Legend has it that if the ravens ever leave the *Tower of London*, both the tower and the monarchy will crumble. One of the world’s most famous fortresses, the Tower has seen duty as a royal palace, prison, armory and even a zoo. Today, it’s a World Heritage Site, and prepare to be dazzled by the Crown Jewels, the world-famous collection of 23,578 gemstones. Stand on the spot where Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard lost their heads. The Yeoman Warders or Beefeaters have been guarding the Tower since 1485.

***Windsor Castle***, an hour outside of London, is where the Royal Family heads for weekend retreats, state visits and special events. A royal residence more than 900 years, visitors can tour the State Apartments, furnished with treasures from the Royal Collection, including paintings by Holbein and Rubens, and a suit of armor made in 1540 and worn by King Henry VIII.

**Cutline: MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME —** Visitors can tour State Rooms and Garden at Buckingham Palace. *Image: Visit Britain.*