
Family Guide

The British Galleries
Make Yourself at Home

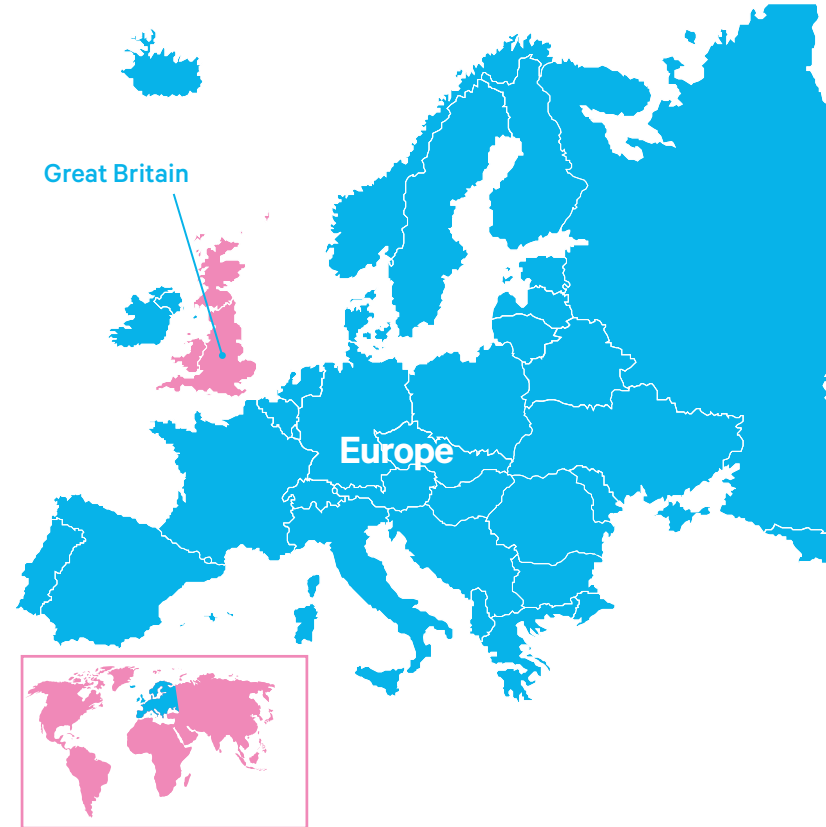


**THE
MET**

Make yourself at home in the British Galleries and find innovative, playful works of art made during the British Empire. Fancy a look? Off we go!

Use the cards in this guide to find the art. Turn the cards over for fun facts and activities.

This map shows the location of Great Britain, where the works of art in this guide were made.



Words to Know

Automaton: a machine that can move by itself

British Empire: a former empire made up of Great Britain and its colonies across the globe, all ruled by the British kings and queens

Colony: a territory under the control of a distant nation

Conservator: an expert who takes care of and repairs works of art

Empire: a large territory, or a number of territories, governed by one ruler

Lacquer: a hard, glossy coating often used on furniture

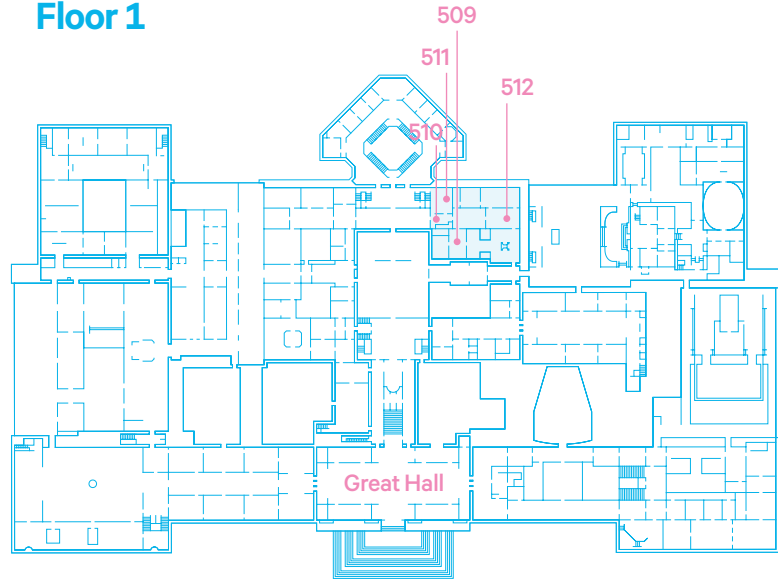
Rococo: an elaborate style of art and architecture that started in France in the 1700s. It's marked by curved lines and soft colors

Trade: the business of buying and selling or exchanging things

Tip for adults:

In these galleries, you'll find information about the British colonies and the slave trade. Use the objects, text, and maps to start a conversation with your family.

British Galleries Floor 1



Please keep in mind!

Sometimes we have to move works of art or even close galleries to renovate them or prepare for exhibitions. When in doubt, ask a guard for help!

Fit for a King



Gallery 509
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Step by Step



Gallery 509
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Step by Step

Look

Slowly climb to the top of this staircase from Cassiobury Park, a grand country home. English ladies and gentlemen enjoyed country life and included images from nature in the designs of their homes. What plants do you see carved into the wooden banister, or railing? Find curly leaves with seed pods, neatly arranged oak leaves and acorns, and pine cones on the corner posts.

Imagine

Pretend you are making your entrance to a party at Cassiobury Park. How would you want someone to announce your arrival?

At Home

Be a carver! Using a pencil, carve a design of your own into a bar of soap. Use a plastic knife to remove large chunks of the soap and a paper clip to shave off smaller pieces. Brush away any soap shavings with a paintbrush. You can give your fancy carved soap to someone as a gift—or use it in the shower!

Note: Please don't touch the carvings. These stairs are a work of art we all need to protect.

Fit for a King

Look

Look up! Four posts lift this bed's canopy twelve feet in the air. Many craftsmen helped create this bed, including woodcarvers who constructed the canopy and headboard, and upholsterers who covered all of the wood with expensive fabric. The original fabric was woven in France and imported to Britain. Over time, the fabric wore out and needed to be replaced with a modern copy by The Met's conservators.

Did You Know?

This fancy bed was actually one of two that Thomas Coningsby, an English nobleman, made for his castle in the countryside.

He used this elegant blue one himself. The other one was royal red—the king slept there when he came to stay. Sleeping in the same type of bed as a king was a powerful statement!

Write

Imagine you are a guest in a castle, and you wake up in a bed like this one. Write a short story describing your royal dream.

Divine Dining



Gallery 511
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Tea Time



Gallery 510
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Tea Time

Look

Golly, there are a lot of teapots here—over 120 in all! Can you spy a black-and-white one with a design that looks like a dinosaur head? This teapot was actually made over two hundred years ago in Staffordshire, England, where many prehistoric fossils were found. The fossils inspired these eye-catching patterns. Which teapot would you want to use at home?

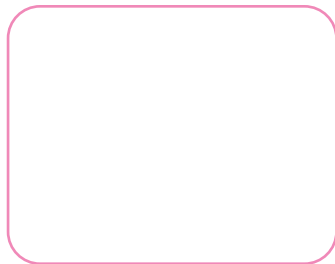
Did You Know?

Hundreds of years ago—like today—trade connected people around the world. During the British Empire, tea leaves and other goods were shipped between Europe,

India, Southeast Asia, China, and North American colonies. These days, tea isn't expensive, but back then it was a luxury item because it came from so far away. Over time, drinking tea became an elaborate daily ritual in Britain. You could find a teapot in almost every household!

Draw

Create your own teapot for your favorite hot drink.



Divine Dining

Look

Sir James Dashwood—seen in the large portrait in this room—spent most of his fortune building and furnishing his home, which included this dining room. Check out that soaring ceiling! One topic of conversation among the dinner guests may have been the ceiling decoration showing the Four Seasons. Look for these festive Roman gods representing each season: Bacchus (autumn), Hercules (winter), Flora (spring), and Ceres (summer). What symbols do you see that connect each figure to a season?

Imagine

You are getting ready to host a party in this dining room. Looking out the window, you see your guests arriving. Act out the scene with a friend or family member.

Did You Know?

The walls of this dining room were removed in 250 sections, numbered, and shipped from Kirtlington Park to New York. In 1955, The Met staff put the room back together here like a giant 3D puzzle!

Time for Fun



Gallery 512
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Double-Duty Desk



Gallery 512
Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries

Double-Duty Desk

Look

This is one over-the-top organizer! It's a secretary cabinet, used for writing and storing letters and other documents. This posh piece of furniture is decorated with images of people, animals, and plants from Asia. As the British Empire expanded, people began to look at other cultures for inspiration. The British craftspeople who created this cabinet probably didn't travel to Asia. Instead, their designs were likely inspired by Asian lacquer furniture that was imported to Europe.

Imagine

This cabinet has twenty drawers and seven other storage compartments to help organize the things inside. What important belongings would you store in it?

Draw

Look closely at all the gold and silver paintings on this desk. Choose one detail and draw it.



Time for Fun

Look

This miniature was based on an actual cabinet designed in a fashionable French style called Rococo. Bejeweled butterflies tremble on their springs, a clock ticks and tocks, and a hidden music box plays a tune. To wind up the music box, someone could insert a key near one of the bulls at the bottom. Behind the cabinet doors are secret drawers holding tiny toys.

Imagine

Dazzling automatons like this were basically toys for adults. They could be displayed proudly above a fireplace, or used as entertainment at parties.

What precious toys do you have? Where do you place them so everyone can admire them?

Draw

What movable invention would you create? Sketch out a design.



Draw

Design a fantasy room inspired by your favorite works of art in the British Galleries.



The Metropolitan
Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue
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metmuseum.org

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Cover: Illustration by Rebecca Clarke based on **Dining Room from Kirtlington Park**, 1748; John Sanderson (British, 18th century); wood, plaster, marble; Fletcher Fund, 1931 (32.531).
Inside (left to right, top to bottom): **Staircase from Cassiobury Park, Hertfordshire** (detail), ca. 1677–80; attributed to Edward Pearce (British, ca. 1630–95); oak, elm, pine; Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.152). **State bed from Hampton Court, Herefordshire** (detail), ca. 1698; British; wood, covered in blue silk damask; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst Jr., 1968 (68.2171a).

Teapot with fossil decoration (detail), ca. 1760–65; British, Staffordshire; salt-glazed stoneware; Gift of Carleton Macy, in memory of his wife, Helen Lefferts Macy, 1937 (37.22.6a, b). **Dining room from Kirtlington Park** (detail), 1748; John Sanderson (British, 18th century); wood, plaster, marble; Fletcher Fund, 1931 (32.531). **Secretary cabinet** (detail), ca. 1735; British; oak, pine, and walnut decorated in red, gilt, and silver-colored japanning, brass, mirror glass; Purchase, Acquisitions Benefit Fund 2013; Gift of Mrs. Edward Karfiol, in memory of Edward Karfiol; Gift of Bernard M. Baruch, in memory of his wife, Annie Griffen Baruch; and Gifts of Irwin Untermyer, George Blumenthal, and Mrs. Russell Sage, by exchange, 2014 (2014.186a, b). **Miniature secretary incorporating a watch** (detail), ca. 1766–72; James Cox (British, ca. 1723–1800); case: agate, with gold mounts, gilded brass, pearls, and paste jewels set in silver; dial: white enamel; movement: wheel balance and cock set with paste jewels; Gift of Admiral F. R. Harris, in memory of his wife, Dena Sperry Harris, 1946 (46.184a–c).