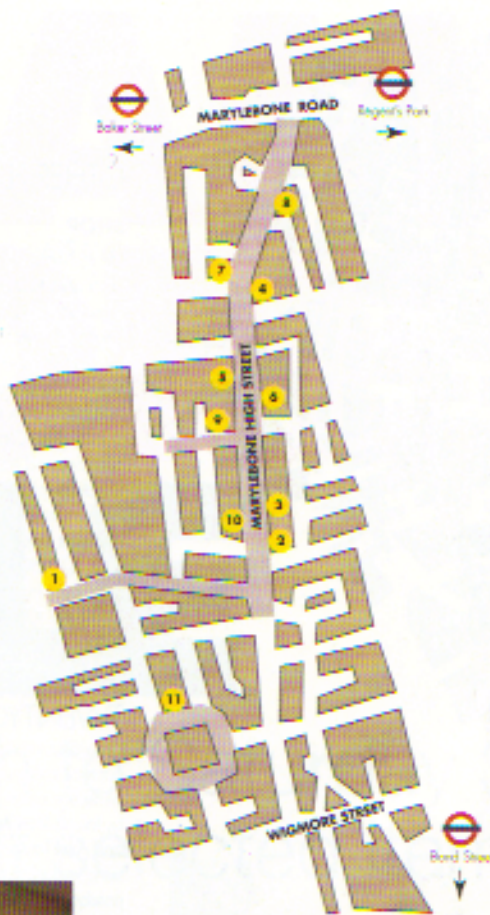


MARYLEBONE HIGH STREET, W1

Christmas shopping should be fun as well as functional, so treat yourself to a stroll up atmospheric Marylebone High Street, which has possibly the best mix of quality food and design stores in town. From specialist gastro stores selling seasonal, organic and artisanal fare to some of the chicest homes and vintage outlets, this inspiring street and its offshoots are great sources of original, affordable gifts. Nearby hot shops Mint and Margaret Howell, at 70 and 34 Wigmore St, W1, offer more top buys.



1 CENTURY

Relocated just off the main drag, Century's vintage mid-20th century pieces (pictured) are great for serious gifts, from chairs by Eames and Ercol to George Nelson 'Bubble' lights and textiles by Lucienne Day and Barbara Brown. Affordable modern designs include wallpaper by Javier Mariscal for Tres Tintas (get your hair done at the upstairs salon while you're at it). **Hot gift** Jonathan Adler 'Bird' bowl, from £40. 58 Blandford St, W1 (020 7487 5100; www.centuryal.com)



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT IN THE AREA

SHOP

2 THE WHITE COMPANY

Two floors of soothing interiors kit in white, neutral or pastel hues, from tactile bed linen to candles, festive wreaths and cut-glass perfume bottles.

Hot gift 'Winter' box set, including home spray, candles and cinnamon sticks, £25. 12 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7935 7879; www.thewhitecompany.com)

3 ORTIGIA

A glam new shop from the stylish Sicilian purveyor of fragrances and food, which sells heavenly bath and body booty and candles, as well as biscuits, jam and olive oil.

Hot gift 'Pomegranate' bath oil, £25 for 200ml. 23 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7487 4684; www.ortigia-sf.com)

4 ROCOCO CHOCOLATES

This tiny store stocks specialist chocolates with gorgeous graphic packaging.

Hot gift 'Basil & Persian Lime' Dark Chocolate Artisan Bar, £3.75. 45 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7935 7780; www.rococochocolates.com)

5 DAUNT BOOKS

An atmospheric Edwardian bookstore with oak-shelved galleries, Daunt is a warren of presents for bookworms, especially travel tomes.

Hot gift *The Language of Things* by Deyan Sudjic (Allen Lane/Penguin, £20). 83 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7224 2295; www.dauntbooks.co.uk)

6 DIVERTIMENTI

Present options at this kitchen shop include turquoise Le Creuset pans, classic Bialetti cafeterias, cookbooks and Italian food treats with an in-store cafe if you feel peckish.

Hot gift Glasses by Bibo, £4.95. 33-34 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7935 0689; www.divertimenti.co.uk)

7 DIPTYQUE

Just launched, the latest branch of this exquisite French store offers its signature range of highly fragranced candles along with room scents, perfumes, colognes and a new range of body creams.

Hot gift 'Geranium Rosa' scented candle, £35. 68 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7224 4948; www.diplyqueparis.com)

8 THE CONRAN SHOP

Offering stylish, modern gifts from lighting to tabletop, textiles and toiletries, this is a true one-stop shop.

Hot gift 'Loulou Ghost' child's chair by Philippe Starck for Kartell, £58. 55 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7723 2223; www.conranshop.co.uk)

EAT

9 LA FROMAGERIE

Dark and delicious, this tempting deli-cafe sells rare cheeses in a temperature-controlled cheese room, as well as seasonal and organic fruit and food.

Hot gift Handmade pottery by John Leech, from £23. 2-6 Moxon St, W1 (020 7935 0341; www.lafromagerie.co.uk)

DRINK

10 THE PROVIDORES AND TAPA ROOM

Peter Gordon's intimate, softly lit bar/restaurant is a great port of call for coffees, teas, wines and cocktails (try the 'Thai Jasmine' daiquiri, £8.50). 109 Marylebone High Street, W1 (020 7935 6175; www.theproviders.co.uk)

VISIT

11 THE WALLACE COLLECTION

This collection of 18th-century painting, furniture and porcelain, set in an ornate townhouse with a courtyard restaurant is a cultural oasis. Manchester Square, W1 (020 7563 9500; www.wallacecollection.org)

