

RETAIL

Harrods, Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason throw open doors to Londoners and tourists

June 15, 2020



Queue forming June 15 outside Selfridges' flagship store on Oxford Street in London as the store reopened. Image courtesy of Selfridges. Photo copyright: Matt Writtle

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The grandes dames of London retail Harrods, Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason have reopened their doors as the United Kingdom relaxes its COVID-19 lockdown.

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The reopenings come with several caveats and new safety measures, but the overall theme is welcoming customers back into bricks-and-mortar even as the COVID-19 coronavirus is at large in the U.K.

"We are delighted that our doors are open once again to welcome our teams and our customers," said Meave Wall, stores director of Selfridges, in a statement.

"Innovation and creativity continues to be a priority for Selfridges and, even with measures in place to keep us all safe, we are pulling out all stops to inspire our customers in store," she said.



Social distancing signage on floor of Selfridges' Oxford Street store. Image courtesy of Selfridges. Photo copyright: Matt Writtle

Retail detail

Selfridges, along with Harrods and Fortnum & Mason, are not only top draws for tourists but also favorites of locals.

The stores' reopening is a psychological boost to a country, which like most of Europe and North America, has been under lockdown since March to curb COVID-19's spread.



Selfridges customers jubilant that the store reopened after a months-long closure mandated by the U.K. government to curb the COVID-19 coronavirus spread. Image courtesy of Selfridges. Photo copyright: Matt Whittle

Each retailer has announced its own measures to protect customers within its four walls.

Selfridges, for example, has new guidelines for all four of its U.K. stores, including the flagship on Oxford Street, two in Manchester and another in Birmingham. There is also an air of festivity to welcome customers.

In addition to the Selfridges doormen welcoming customers, local street performers entertained as the first shoppers returned June 15, a move coordinated with Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London.

The Selfridges London store reopening will entice with the debut of exclusives such as the smiley collection from Loewe, while the Body Studio will offer Spanx activewear for the first time.

Menswear Designer Street will play host to the global exclusive Kenzo x Vans collection with a takeover of The Bowl, which is Selfridges one-of-a-kind skate destination.

The London Foodhall also introduced Parisian eatery Cojean, offering healthy, seasonal food-to-go.

Selfridges has launched several measures to welcome customers back to shop safely and with confidence, including:

- To help customers in store, services will include VIP concierge, styling advice with experts, Elfridges advisors to help with gifting across all departments, and Click & Collect
- Shopping by appointment will be introduced, with slots available outside of regular trading hours and fast-track access to store
- Selfridges will launch a seamless and safe at home shopping through bookable virtual appointments with Selfridges stylists, gifting specialists through Elfridges at home and beauty concierge service
- In store London restaurants EL&N, Dolly's, Tonkotsu and Aubaine will offer takeaway options, and sweets and treats to go will be available from milk-and-cookie connoisseurs Blondies Kitchen and artisan ice-cream makers Snowflake
- Remaining services and restaurants will be back up and running when U.K. government guidelines allow. In the meantime, customers will be able to shop across the full range of departments at Selfridges fashion, accessories, beauty, toys, technology, gifting, food and wine, lifestyle and homeware
- Selfridges will also offer a range of store-to-home delivery options for vulnerable and self-isolating customers and, NHS and key workers will have priority access to all stores as they do for the London Foodhall

Selfridges has also extended its community initiative #kindnesschallenge to its window displays which have been taken over by thank-you notes from Selfridges team members celebrating the help, support and acts of kindness

shown to them or to their local community throughout this period.

Store hours will be shortened for the time being, typically starting at 11 a.m. and closing at 7 p.m.



The majestic Harrods department store is a top draw for tourists from around the world. Image credit: Harrods

Not just cosmetic changes

Fellow department store Harrods is following a similar protocol with its Knightsbridge store, again functioning with 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. operating hours.

Harrods has also taken extra precautions in its food halls and beauty areas. Besides the usual social distancing arrows and signage, along with Perspex partitions, the retailer has also made changes in its cosmetics area, which will certainly affect beauty brands.

"For hygiene purposes, we will no longer provide tester products on our beauty counters," Harrods said on its site.

"Our team will be happy to provide tester products on request, using sample palette plates to allow customers to try products themselves with a member of the team advising from a safe distance.

"No make-up brushes will be used and, where sample palettes are not possible, disposable single-dip testers will be available for customers who wish to try on make-up. All tester products will be thoroughly cleaned before and after use."



Decals on Fortnum & Mason's stairs to help with social distancing between floors. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

Fortnum & Mason, grocer to the British Queen, also reopened doors June 15 with safety measures similar to Selfridges and Harrods.

In its messaging, Fortnum stressed customer and employee health safety, options for takeaway and delivery, and the fact that the food halls across all floors are fully stocked.

All retailers stressed ecommerce as an option for shopping with them, highlighting the one channel that customers could access under lockdown.



Way to go: Fortnum & Mason floorsignage. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

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