



The Royal Hotel Cardiff

Cardiff, Wales

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7/10 Telegraph expert rating

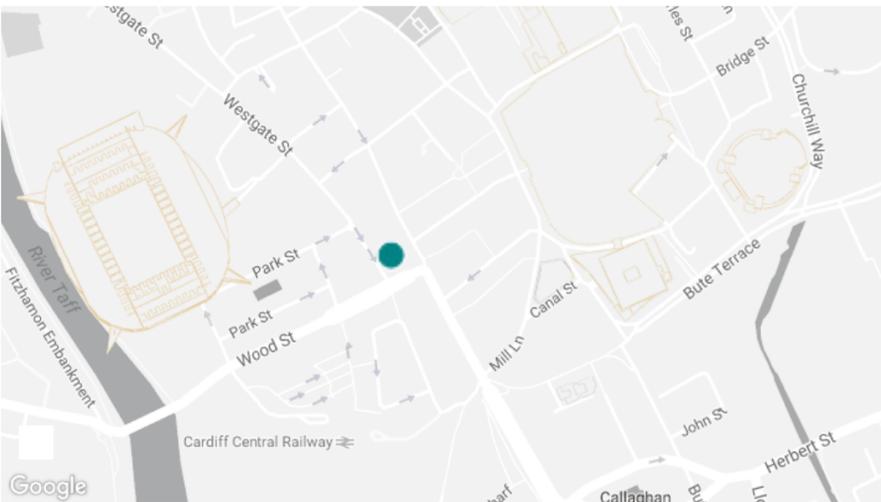
" A landmark building on a street known to most for its brassy nightlife. The 19th-century Royal Hotel is Cardiff's oldest hotel, close to all the city's essentials and providing a comfortable night's rest after urban exploring. "

By **Benjamin Parker**,
TRAVEL WRITER

Location

8/10

Sat on St Mary's Street right in the centre of Cardiff, 100 metres from Cardiff Central railway station and with the Millennium Stadium opposite. You are a few minutes' walk from Cardiff's shopping centres and covered arcades, home to vintage clothes and coffee shops. Running alongside the entrance is a plethora of pubs and clubs, plus a surprising number of gelato bars. It can get pretty rowdy at the weekend, meaning you can hear shouting outside or stumbling down the corridors, but you're also close to the quiet of Cardiff's parks and castle.



Map ©Report a map error

Style & character

7/10

The Victorian building – Grade II listed, with a façade somewhere between Italianate and Palladian architecture – is a prominent fixture on the high street (especially the corner, with a piano nobile-like level and pointed pediment on the curve). The reception is on level two, so after a somewhat grand entrance past thick columns, navigating the stairs or taking the frustratingly slow elevator is underwhelming. The bar and reception, with dark oak floors, black furniture and taupe walls, feel more sleek – though the sofas, near-fluorescent in purple, are distracting. The hotel's sixth floor, nicknamed 6B, is home to rooftop beehives; the beeswax is used for soap and candles.



Service & facilities

6/10

On the whole, staff are helpful and friendly. Depending on who you're dealing with – this applies from front desk to breakfast staff – you will encounter varying levels of enthusiasm. They can point you in the right direction without offering any insider knowledge on Cardiff. No additional facilities here.

- Bar
- Parking
- Restaurant
- Wi-Fi

Rooms

7/10

The rooms show signs of wear and tear: ripped wallpaper, chipped edges on furniture, a grubby telephone (a revamp is coming soon). The higher floors have views across the city; on a clear day you can see the bronzed roof of the Wales Millennium Centre. Colours are kept simple: black leather surrounds the comfortable Hypno beds; cream walls and wallpaper are patterned with silver tree branches.

Bathrooms share the same signs of use (scuffed surfaces) but are modern and clean. The hotel has rebranded two windowless rooms as 'Cinema Rooms', geared towards guests not wanting to venture out (75" HD smart televisions and PlayStation 4s included). Film posters and popcorn make it undeniably gimmicky, but it's a clever spin on the less popular spaces.

Food & drink

6/10

Fitz's Bar is somewhere to kill time with a glass of wine. Food there, which can also be ordered in-room, is simple but not spectacular, including sandwiches, curries, and fish and chips. More exciting options can be found close by, such as steaks at The Meating Place, or The Potted Pig, located in a former bank vault.

Breakfast, cooked to order and from a continental buffet, is reasonable; the drab Captain Scott Room – where the explorer hosted a farewell dinner before his ill-fated 1910 Antarctica expedition – may have a grand history and lovely mahogany panelling, but feels unloved and dated, from chairs to carpet.

Value for money

7/10

Double rooms from £44.95. Breakfast from £9. Free Wi-Fi.

Access for guests with disabilities?

Step-free access to the hotel from Westgate Street and four adapted rooms, available in double, twin and triple configurations.

Family-friendly?

Not particularly, though there are triple rooms that could work for small families.

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