



## KEW GARDENS

March 17, 2010



When the girls asked me to write for Babyccino one of my first ideas for a post was **Kew Gardens**. We got to know the Royal Botanical Gardens when we moved down South and immediately became members. We now go every couple of weeks and still love it just as much - it is such a great place for kids.

Apart from being a huge space to run around with fascinating trees, flowers and plants, there is also a dedicated indoor children's area called **Climbers and Creepers**. All the zones have an educational element relating to plants and their habitat and have been so cleverly thought out to cater for a really wide age group (quoted as age 3 - 9 but there are great touchy-feely bits too which are good for babies).

On the other side of the gardens is the **Treetop walkway** (designed by the architects of The London Eye) which is 18 metres up in the air and 200 metres around - giving you an opportunity to see the tops of the trees and those who inhabit them. At ground level there is a tunnel with an exhibit giving insight to what happens under the trees (good for any bug and creepy-crawly enthusiasts!).

The duck pond in front of the Palm House (near the Victoria Gate) is great for spotting all sorts of water birds and they even have an explanation of the different species with sound-buttons to hear their different calls (fondly called the 'quack-board' in our house and it is always the first thing my 3-year-old wants to go and play with - our favourite is the call of the Eider).

And this is just the start of the fun, with Badger Sets, an aquarium and greenhouses\* full of exotic plants, trees and plant life (The Evolution House exhibits Stromatolites, which are the oldest living organisms on the Earth and we see them as small bubble eruptions in a sandy pool of water at the entrance - cooooooowooooo!!)

Kew is also well equipped for fuel stops with plenty of cafes and restaurants all serving good children's options (they do those clever lunch boxes where you can pick 5 picnic-esque bits to make up a lunch, and in every box there is a pack of seeds to take home and plant).



So why has it taken me so long to write this post? Kew has been working on a new outdoor children's playground for outside **Climbers and Creepers**. They had some issues with planning permission (it was meant to be up and running in the Autumn of last year) so I wanted to wait to be able to tell you about it and when it would be ready. Well we went to Kew last weekend and it is well and truly underway (see pics). It will be launched in time for the Easter holidays on 2nd April. It is called **Treehouse Towers** and looks a whole lot of fun for up to 300 children - a properly exciting place to let off some of that chocolate-easter-egg-energy! We are very excited about its launch and will definitely be heading down there to try it out.

\* Note the greenhouses at Kew are not your ordinary greenhouses - they are possibly the most beautiful greenhouses in the World! The Palm House has 700 panes of glass and is considered the most important Victorian glass and iron structure in the world. And The Temperate House is the largest surviving Victorian glasshouse in the World - pretty impressive stuff.

**Kew Gardens:**

Royal Botanic Gardens  
Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB  
email: [info@kew.org](mailto:info@kew.org)  
24-hour visitor information line: +44 (0)20 8332 5655  
Opening times:  
Kew opens at 9.30am every day except 24/25 December.

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