



# Edinburgh



Whatever your budget, here are some great ideas on what to see and do in the city

**A** modern, lively city with a wealth of history, Edinburgh has much to offer its visitors. Year after year, tourists from around the world descend on the Scottish capital. Whether it's to celebrate Hogmanay in December, see a performance at the annual Festival in August or just to enjoy a city break, no one will go home without promising to return.

A New Town with row after row of Georgian houses is separated from the Old Town, and its closes and stairways, by a grid of streets full of designer shops and high street stores. Cafés, restaurants and bars to suit all tastes are to be found wherever you look. And it's all easily accessible on foot. Edinburgh is a compact city with something for everyone.



## GETTING THERE

Edinburgh Airport is situated about 25 minutes away from the city centre by bus. There are flights to Edinburgh from regional airports all around the UK. To find out more see [www.edinburghairport.com](http://www.edinburghairport.com).

There are two train stations in Edinburgh – Waverley in the city centre and Haymarket, just two miles west from Waverley. ScotRail, Great Northern Eastern Railway (GNER) and Virgin trains all serve Waverley. Haymarket is closest to Murrayfield rugby stadium.

## GOOD GUIDEBOOK

*Edinburgh Directions*, £6.99 (ISBN 1-84353-454-1)

## GOOD THINGS TO SEE AND DO

1

### Edinburgh Castle

[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

Perched on the basalt remains of an extinct volcano, Edinburgh Castle dominates its city. It was here that Mary, Queen of Scots, gave birth to her only son, James IV of Scotland, and visiting her apartments, as well as getting close to the Stone of Destiny (the coronation seat of Scottish kings), will no doubt be highlights of your visit. But it's the breathtaking views of the city and beyond that linger in your memory. Don't forget your camera. Adult admission £11.

2

### Calton Hill

With its odd collection of buildings, including something that resembles the Parthenon, Calton Hill is often referred to as the 'Athens of the North', but that's not the main reason to climb all the way up. Stand at the top and just indulge in those views – the ones that appear on so many postcards, of Princes Street, the Scott Monument and the castle in the distance. They're magnificent.

3

### The Royal Mile

The walk from the Castle Esplanade down the Royal Mile towards Holyrood Palace is one of the most historical – and nicest – strolls in the city. Take time to explore the Old Town with its fascinating alleyways and tall tenement buildings, stop to admire the High Kirk of St Giles (if you see people spitting on nearby heart-shaped pavement bricks, they're hoping for good luck!). If you want to escape the crowds, pop in to Dunbar's Close, a peaceful, shaded garden.

4

### Museum of Childhood

This is our favourite museum on The Royal Mile (and it's free). Take a nostalgic trip back in time and see collections of dolls, train sets, teddy bears and more. Kids can have fun dressing up in Victorian and Edwardian clothes.



5

### The Stand Comedy Club

Tel 0131 558 7272  
[www.thestand.co.uk](http://www.thestand.co.uk)

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August is the largest arts festival in the world. But don't worry if you visit at another time of year, there are still laughs aplenty at the Stand Comedy Club. Spend Sunday lunchtime watching two hours of comedy for free – all you'll need to fork out is a fiver for pub food.

6

### Greyfriars Tolbooth and Highland Kirk

Tel 0131 225 1900  
[www.greyfriarskirk.com](http://www.greyfriarskirk.com)

The dog lovers amongst us may shed a tear when they hear the story of Bobby, a little Skye Terrier who sat vigil at his master's grave for 14 years. Visit the Greyfriars Kirk, off Candlemaker Row, pop into the small room at the back of the church and watch the short video about how the dog became something of an Edinburgh 'celebrity'. Visit the Museum of Edinburgh on the Royal Mile to learn more.

7

### Ghost and Ghouls Tour

Tel 0131 225 5445  
[www.mercattours.com](http://www.mercattours.com)

An entertaining cloaked guide will escort you around the Mercat Cross, City Chamber and various closes and wynds, telling vivid tales of murder and torture. Audience participation is expected! Then you're taken to the underground vaults, beneath the city streets, with only a candle lighting your way. This part is for the brave only! A family ticket costs £22.

8

### The Scottish Parliament

Tel 0131 348 5000  
[www.scottishparliament.uk](http://www.scottishparliament.uk)

At the Holyrood end of the Royal Mile, you will come across a building that looks like no other in Edinburgh – the Scottish Parliament building. People are divided about whether or not they like the design. Visit and make up your own mind. Access to the building is free – and on some days you can watch proceedings in the Debating Chamber – but you'll learn much more on a guided hour-long tour. Cost £5, book in advance.



**GOOD PLACES TO STAY**

**1**

**Tigerlily**  
Tel 0131 225 5005  
www.tigerlilyedinburgh.co.uk  
This luxurious boutique hotel, located in a Georgian townhouse in the city's New Town, has won several awards for its interior designs, and the minute you walk through the doors, you'll understand why. Its quirky, innovative dining room and bars attract fashion magazine shoots and stylish Edinburgh locals, and for those guests lucky enough to be staying overnight, the 33 bedrooms certainly have the wow factor.

- A Saturday night stay in a luxury double costs £175 and can be booked online at the Tigerlily website. You can also find good accommodation deals at www.lastminute.com and www.priceyourmeal.com.

**2**

**Ramada Mount Royal**  
Tel 0131 225 7161  
www.ramadajarvis.co.uk  
Just turn up at this hotel and you'll end up paying a nightly rate of around £195, but book online 21 days in advance and the price for a double or twin room could be more in the region of £68 – a bargain considering you are right in the city centre, just a short walk from Waverley train station. Rooms are clean and functional, with a modern bathroom (the cheaper rooms don't have much of a view).

- There are two Ramada hotels listed under Edinburgh – when you make a booking, make sure you choose Mount Royal over Livingstone, the latter is 17 miles away.

**3**

**The Knight Residence**  
Tel 0131 622 8120  
www.theknightresidence.co.uk  
A real home from home, the Knight Residence is good value for families, or groups of friends. Self-catering, serviced accommodation, the longer you stay, the cheaper it becomes, and all the main sights are within easy walking distance. Each apartment has a kitchen with dishwasher, freezer and washing machine, a dining area, lounge and bathroom. There's even a LCD TV, digital cable TV (with Sky Sports), a DVD and hi-fi system in the main living area – and a TV in every room!

- Seven nights in a two-bed apartment in April, for a family of five, costs £910.

**4**

**The Point**  
Tel 0131 229 9929  
www.point-hotel.co.uk  
Bedrooms here are modern, minimalist and marvellous. Go online to their website and see for yourself. Located in a building that used to house the Co-op, The Point is within easy walking distance of shops and sights – perfect for a city break.

- Weekend rates for a standard double room at busy times of the year are quoted as £155, but book online in advance, be flexible with dates and a double room for one can be £67.



**TIPS**

- Edinburgh may be a bustling city, but there are plenty of open green spaces too. In fact, right in the centre of the city, opposite one of the busiest shopping streets in Scotland, you'll find Princes Street Gardens – the perfect place to sit in for a while and ponder over those purchases.
- Make sure a walk around Holyrood Park is also on your itinerary. Craggy hills, moorland and a loch could easily convince you you're in the wild Scottish Highlands, especially if

you're feeling energetic and decide to ramble up the rugged 250 metre high Arthur's Seat, a volcano that's been extinct for more than 350 million years.

- You can pick up a free leaflet at the Scottish Parliament and take yourself on a self-guided tour of the outside of the buildings, learning more about the design ideas and history of the controversial site.
- If you enjoy reading about Rebus, the Edinburgh Inspector created by author Ian

Rankin, then you may want to visit Rebus's favourite pub, the Oxford Bar at 8 Young Street.

- Pick up a free copy of the Edinburgh Times from the Tourist Office – it's a monthly lifestyle guide to what's on in the city. See also www.edinburghtimes.co.uk.
- For fans of designer shopping, make sure you visit Multrees Walk – Louis Vuitton, Calvin Klein and Mulberry are all there, and it's just beside Harvey Nichols. Or have a wander

along West Bow and pop in to Pinocchio, a great toy shop, or Anta, for some modern tartan goods.

- The Real Mary King's Close is a five-star visitor attraction which takes you under the city streets of the Old Town. A tour lasts 40-45 mins. For more info see www.realmarykingsclose.com.
- For more ideas on where to eat in Edinburgh, see The Which? Good Food Guide 2008, priced £16.99 (ISBN 978-1-84490-036-7).

## GOOD PLACES TO EAT

1

### The Witchery by the Castle

Tel 0131 225 5613

[www.thewitchery.com](http://www.thewitchery.com)

If you ever find yourself mulling over the wine menu, not sure which bottle to choose, be warned, there are 134 pages to browse through here. Good house wines start at £16.95, or if you really want to splash out and celebrate, then you might be tempted by the bottle on offer at a whopping £3250!

Despite its name, there's not a cauldron or pointy black hat in this 16th-century building. There are, however, two excellent atmospheric dining rooms – the Witchery and the Secret Garden. A three-course meal for two, with wine, costs around £110. Make a reservation.

2

### Tower Restaurant, The Museum of Scotland

Tel 0131 225 3003

[www.tower-restaurant.com/info2.html](http://www.tower-restaurant.com/info2.html)

You may not have a big budget, but that doesn't mean you can't dine in some of the city's finest restaurants. Many establishments have lunchtime and early evening specials, offering excellent value for money. The Tower Restaurant at the Museum of Scotland will serve a two-course meal, between 5pm-6.30pm, for £12.95. Eat there after that time and you'd pay £20-£34 for a similar meal. Afterwards, visit the 7th-floor roof terrace and watch the night fall over the castle.

3

### The Elephant House

Tel 0131 220 5355

[www.elephant-house.co.uk](http://www.elephant-house.co.uk)

Calling all Harry Potter fans! This old-fashioned tearoom, cluttered with around 600 elephants of all shapes and sizes, is the place where author JK Rowling penned her first novel about Hogwarts, Muggles and magic – paper and pencils sit in containers on the window sills just in case you are inspired to write your own best-seller! During the day, the Elephant House is self-service, after 6pm there's table service and a choice of main courses, such as chilli con carne or chicken fajitas, for £5.25. Go online to the website to get some top tips on how to make a great cup of tea or coffee.

4

### Henderson's

Tel 0131 225 2131

[www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk](http://www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk)

'Eat better, live better' is the motto of this much-loved Edinburgh institution, which has been serving locals and tourists alike for the past 40 years. All tastes and diets (vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free) are catered for – choose from the Salad Table, Bistro or Wine Bar. The latter regularly has live music.

