



Glasgow

Scotland's largest city bursts with personality. Pack your mac and a sense of humour, and you won't go far wrong in one of the UK's friendliest cities

Often purported to mean 'dear green place', Glasgow is a fitting name for a city with more than 90 parks and green open spaces. With so many areas offering respite, once you've admired the Victorian architecture and wandered the various museums, there's an abundance of tranquil spots in which to relax.

Devote some time to the much-celebrated architect and designer, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, whose influence on Glasgow is hard to miss. Or indulge in some serious retail therapy, as the city rivals London when it comes to shopping.

Despite the greenery, shops and culture – it's the people who make Glasgow special. Never daunted by the weather, Glaswegians are high-spirited and offer a warm welcome, even if the forecast is cold and rainy.

GETTING THERE

Trains run from London Euston and London King's Cross direct to Glasgow Central station, and the journey time is approximately five hours.

There's also the option of taking First ScotRail's Caledonian Sleeper service if you prefer to travel overnight and get some sleep on the way. Trains depart from London Euston to Glasgow Central. For details on prices and timetables, visit First

ScotRail at www.firstgroup.com/scotrail/caledoniansleeper/index.html.

To find services departing from your local station, visit National Rail Enquiries at www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Alternatively, you can fly to Glasgow International airport, situated a 20-minute bus or taxi ride from the city centre. Glasgow Prestwick airport is slightly further away and takes approximately 45 minutes to reach the centre by taxi or train.

GETTING AROUND

An extensive bus network operates throughout Glasgow. Tickets are purchased from the driver on the bus, but be sure to have some coins as change is not given. To check bus services and times before you go to Glasgow, visit Traveline Scotland at www.travelinescotland.com.

Glasgow also has a small underground, which links the city centre with the West End. If you hear a reference to the 'Clockwork Orange' it is likely to be a local discussing the underground, as it is one circular route with 15 stops, and stations are marked with a large orange 'U'.

Taxis can be hailed in the city and prices are reasonable. We paid approximately £6.00 to get from the city centre to the West End. Alternatively, to pre-book a taxi, call Glasgow Taxis Ltd on 0141 429 2900.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

■ Botanic Gardens

Tel 0141 334 2422

The tranquil Botanic Gardens are a great place to rejuvenate after a busy day. Benches are

scattered throughout Kibble Palace, providing relief for weary legs in a sanctuary of tree fern calm. Take your time to wander through the eleven glasshouses and discover enormous banana plants, water lilies, cacti and begonias from around the globe. Free

■ Gallery of Modern Art

Tel 0141 287 3050

www.glasgowmuseums.com

This amazing building in the hub of Merchant City has only been a gallery since 1996. Art from around the world is showcased here and exhibitions change regularly. An activity corner can be found on the first floor with books, puzzles, games and worksheets.

TIP Visit the Saturday Art Club between 10.30am and 1pm, where families can get involved in drawing, sculpture-making and collage. Open to children aged three to 11. Free

■ Glasgow Science Centre

Tel 0871 540 1000

www.glasgowsciencecentre.org

Make the most of Glasgow's Science Centre by getting up early and spending a full day there. Packed with more than 250 hands-on exhibits children can balance a beach ball on jet air; make giant bubbles; play a tune on an invisible harp, or dress up as a pirate.

TIP Catch at least one of the live, interactive science shows. Adults £7.95, children £5.95

■ Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum

Tel 0141 276 9599

www.glasgowmuseums.com

Re-opened in 2006 after refurbishment, the UK's largest civic museum is nothing less than

**For the full magazine report on Glasgow,
see p42 of the January 2009 issue of Which? Holiday**

breathtaking – the grand interior itself makes the visit worthwhile. Its three floors are filled with fine exhibits – too many to single out.
TIP Plan to be there at 1pm (3pm on Sundays) and enjoy a half-hour organ recital held in the centre hall. **Free**

■ Mackintosh Trail ticket

Tel 0141 946 6600

www.crmsociety.com

Mackintosh plays a big part in the city's history and there are plenty of spots displaying his work. The Mackintosh Trail ticket (£12) allows you entrance to 12 sights and free transport for a day. A tour at the Glasgow School of Art is a good starting point where you will see the magnificent Mackintosh library. Stop off for lunch at the Mackintosh designed Willow Tea Rooms.

■ People's Palace and Winter Gardens

Tel 0141 276 0788

www.glasgowmuseums.com

Highlights at the People's Palace begin outside, where visitors can marvel at the world's largest terracotta fountain. In the museum itself look out for comedian Billy Connolly's banana boots, worn on stage in the 1970s, and discover how many once lived through the reconstructed 'single-end' tenement home. Once you've finished delving into Glasgow's past, replenish with a coffee surrounded by exotic plants in the beautiful Winter Gardens. **Free**

■ Shop 'til you drop

Have credit cards at the ready and treat yourself to a splurge in Scotland's shopping city. For jewellery, head to the pretty Argyll Arcade located between two of Glasgow's most popular shopping streets – Argyll Street and Buchanan Street. Byres Road in the West End is a good bet for more quirky, independent shops, ideal for picking up a gift or two.

■ The Tenement House,

Tel 0141 333 0183

www.nts.org.uk/Property/59/

This carefully maintained tenement house gives the chance to step back in time to the early 20th century. Walk around the living quarters of Miss Toward, a typical Glaswegian lady of her time, who lived in the flat for more than 50 years. Passionate guides are on hand to offer additional information and an exhibition aids further learning on tenement life.

TIP Admission is free to National Trust members. Open daily 1 March – 31 October, 1pm-5pm. Adults **£5**

PLACES TO STAY

■ Hilton Glasgow Grosvenor

Tel 0141 339 8811

www.hilton.co.uk/glasgowgrosvenor

Board games, colouring books and free meals for children under 11 make the Hilton Glasgow

Grosvenor a great choice for families. Other benefits include adjoining rooms and a babysitting service. The grounds of the Botanic Gardens opposite provide space for children to let off steam. Family rooms can cost from £135 – search online in advance and be flexible with dates in order to get the best price.

■ Hotel du Vin at One Devonshire Gardens

Tel 0141 339 2001

www.hotelduvin.com

You'll find this luxurious retreat on a peaceful, tree-lined terrace in Glasgow's West End. It comprises five Victorian townhouses, complete with original features such as ornate corniced ceilings and stained-glass windows. Rooms exude character – be sure to make time for a visit to the Whisky Snug, or arrange for a tour of the wine cellar depending on your preferred tittle.

■ Jurys Inn

Tel 0141 314 4820

www.jurysinns.com

This chain hotel offers everything needed for a city centre base that won't break the bank. Rooms are clean and spacious, with doubles starting from £69. A two-minute stroll takes you to the main shopping areas of Buchanan Street, Argyle Street and the St Enoch Centre. **TIP** Request a room at the back of the hotel for great views overlooking the city and river Clyde.

■ Malmaison Glasgow

Tel 0141 572 1000

www.malmaison.com

Malmaison has converted this former Greek Orthodox Church into a haven for holidaymakers. Character oozes from this hotel, with its original vaulted ceiling and iron-sculpted staircase, and it doesn't stop there. Images depicting Glaswegian life are scattered throughout. Bathrooms offer lush toiletries, yours to take home. And sleek, sumptuous rooms are both cosy and welcoming. We booked online and paid £109 for a double room – check the website for special offers and the best rates.

PLACES TO EAT

■ The Chippy Doon the Lane

Tel 0141 225 5612

www.thechippyglasgow.com

This is not your average chippy – expect to tuck into large portions of fresh battered fish and chunky hand-cut chips cooked to order and served in swish, candlelit surroundings. A two-course special consisting of soup of the day with bread and butter and a fish dinner is available for £8.95.

■ The Loft

Tel 0845 166 6028

www.socialanimal.co.uk/glasgowwestend/the_loft/

Housed in the top of the Grosvenor cinema,

The Loft opens its door to families daily. Visit on a Sunday, though, to have the most fun, when children can enjoy driving around in toy cars or watching cartoons on the big screens. Among other activities there's also free face painting to keep younger family members entertained. Any meal on the Italian menu can be ordered as a half portion.

■ Stravaigin

Tel 0141 334 2665

www.stravaigin.com

Located in Gibson Street, Stravaigin lives up to its motto of 'think global, eat local'. Tantalise your palate with a mix of international and traditional Scottish dishes served in a good atmosphere. Mains cost between £13 and £22.

■ Ubiquitous Chip

Tel 0141 334 5007

www.ubiquitouschip.co.uk

Ubiquitous Chip sits cosily on cobbled Ashton Lane in the heart of the West End. Savour great Scottish cooking in this long-established Glaswegian institution. A two-course meal of venison haggis and mashed potato, followed by steak and kidney suet pudding with candied root vegetables, costs £34.85.

GUIDEBOOK & WEBSITES

We recommend *Footprint Pocket Guide to Glasgow*, £7.99 (ISBN 9781904777014).

Good websites include www.seeglasgow.com and www.visitscotland.com

