

EDINBURGH

SCOTLAND'S MULTILAYERED CAPITAL

With its mix of meandering medieval alleyways, stately neoclassical terraces and cutting-edge arts festivals, Edinburgh is a cultural capital for the ages.

It all began with fire and rock. The rugged, rangy landscape of modern-day Edinburgh was formed by three volcanoes, which rose together here around 350 million years ago. The first of these (Castle Rock) is the most recognisable, with its long-extinct volcanic plug now home to moody Edinburgh Castle. The second (Calton Hill) sits to the east of the New Town, topped with mighty monuments and panorama-loving picnickers. And the third (Arthur's Seat) has become the go-to place for hikers, bikers, dog walkers and kite fliers, who ascend its crag-fringed slopes for views across Holyrood Park and beyond.

For more than 1000 years, the city of Edinburgh was literally shaped by these volcanoes, with the Old Town squeezed into the gaps between Castle Rock to the west, Arthur's Seat to the east and Calton Hill to the north. It was only with the foundation of the New Town in the 18th century that Edinburgh began to spread beyond

the borders of the three volcanoes. Two and a half centuries on, and these once-dominant peaks are now mere pinpricks on the sprawling map of Scotland's capital.

Despite this, most visitors to Edinburgh still confine themselves to its ancient, volcanic heart. It's an understandable urge: the Old Town has a frankly impossible-to-resist charm, with its mesmerising mishmash of narrow streets, winding alleys

and underground vaults.

It's also the place to be during August, when the world's biggest arts festival comes to town. But take a walk up any of Edinburgh's extinct volcanoes and it becomes clear just how much of the modern city lies beyond the Old Town. The leafy squares of the New

Town and the splendid architecture of the West End. The food markets of Stockbridge and the fancy restaurants of Leith. The hipster bars of Holyrood and the student pubs of South Edinburgh. Edinburgh is a vast, varied and vibrant city – and it is begging to be explored.



MARION CARNIEL/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

THE MAIN AREAS

OLD TOWN

Castles and cobbled streets. **p54**

HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT

History and hill walking. **p62**

NEW TOWN

Shop-lined Georgian streets. **p68**

WEST END & BEYOND

Modern art and hidden gems. **p75**



STEVEN/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Left: Scotch egg, Stockbridge Market (p80). Above: Edinburgh Castle (p56)

STOCKBRIDGE

Food markets and gardens. [p80](#)

LEITH

Waterfront pubs and restaurants. [p84](#)

SOUTH EDINBURGH

Green parks and hills. [p89](#)

Find Your Way

With the narrow wynds and closes (medieval alleyways) of the Old Town, the grandly proportioned streets of the New Town and the well-marked footpaths snaking up Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh is a very strollable city. We've highlighted its key landmarks and neighbourhoods to help you plan your adventure.



FROM THE AIRPORT

The easiest way into town is by tram. It's 30 minutes from Edinburgh Airport to Princes St, with trams running every five to 10 minutes throughout the day. Lothian Buses also operate a regular express AirLink 100 bus to the centre (30 minutes).



WALK

As a compact city, Edinburgh is best explored on foot – particularly during festival season, when parts of the centre are pedestrianised. It's easy to walk between the Old Town, New Town and most other neighbourhoods, though expect a few hills along the way.



TRAM

As well as offering easy access from the airport to the city centre, the tram now continues all the way to Newhaven, making it a great way to hop between the West End, New Town and Leith. Services run daily from around 5.30am to 11.30pm.



BUS

Lothian Buses offer easy access to all corners of Edinburgh, as well as connections to popular stops just outside the city, including the Pentland Hills, South Queensferry and North Berwick. Staying longer? Pick up a one-day or multiday ticket, including unlimited tram travel.



Plan Your Days

Explore the city's world-class art galleries, stroll its pretty riverside paths, and taste its fresh and seasonal seafood. Oh, and don't forget a dram of whisky too.



BRIAN KENNEY/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

St Giles Cathedral (p57)



YOU'LL ALSO WANT TO...

Experience a different side to Edinburgh from a football terrace, travel a little beyond the city limits, and try an alternative spirit.



WATCH THE FOOTBALL

Two big clubs, one big rivalry. On derby day, choose between **Hearts** (Heart of Midlothian FC) and **Hibs** (Hibernian FC).



HIT THE BEACH

Sandy **Portobello beach** is perfect for a stroll or a paddle. Chilly water means swimming is only for the bravest.



TRY THE LOCAL GIN

It's not all about whisky: try the gins of city distillers such as **Pickering's, Edinburgh Gin** and **Lind & Lime**.

DAY 1

Morning

● You'll spend a whole day strolling along Edinburgh's most famous street: the Royal Mile. Start with a stunning view from the esplanade of **Edinburgh Castle** (p56), then learn some Royal Mile history at **Gladstone's Land** (p54). Look for the carving of an angel with bagpipes in **St Giles Cathedral** (p57) before a well-earned brunch at the **Edinburgh Larder** (p57).

Afternoon

● Walk down to the **Palace of Holyroodhouse** (p64) and the **Scottish Parliament Building** (p64), then make room for dinner with a hike up **Arthur's Seat** (p65).

Evening

● Dine at the sublime **Wedgwood the Restaurant** (p66), then finish your day with a craft beer in **Holyrood 9A** (p66) and live music in **Stramash** (p59).

BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: ROB CASEY/SNS GROUP VIA GETTY IMAGES ©, GABRIELA ANTOSOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK ©, BARMALINI/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

DAY 2

Morning

● Pick up a coffee and pastry from **Lovecrumbs** (p57) and wander around **Grassmarket** (p60). Divert up through **Greyfriars Kirkyard** (p56; look out for some familiar names on the tombstones) then spend a few hours in the excellent **National Museum of Scotland** (p60). As well as the exhibits, there are also lovely views from the rooftop terrace and tasty lunches in the cafe.

Afternoon

● Stroll through the **Meadows** (p91) then take a Pickering's Gin Distillery tour at **Summerhall** (p91). You can grab a bite to eat in the venue's **Royal Dick Bar** (p94).

Evening

● Catch a show at the **Queen's Hall** (p93), before ending the day with a whisky in the nearby **Dagda Bar** (p94).

DAY 3

Morning

● Start today with a stroll through **Princes Street Gardens** (p71). Venture east to visit the **Scottish National Gallery** (p71) and the **Scott Monument** (p71), then loop back along the shop-lined **George Street** (p72). Continue to picture-perfect **Dean Village** (p77), before following the Water of Leith north into Stockbridge.

Afternoon

● Grab lunch to go from **Herbie of Edinburgh** (p82) and picnic in the **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh** (p82). Carry on north to see the **Royal Yacht Britannia** (p85) in Leith, then treat yourself to dinner at one of the Shore's excellent seafood restaurants.

Evening

● Finally, hop on the tram back to the New Town for a cocktail in **Panda & Sons** (p72).



HEAD INTO NATURE

Escape the crowds by strolling through the **Meadows**, climbing **Corstorphine Hill** or hiking in the **Pentland Hills**.



DANCE A CEILIDH

Move like a Scot at **Edinburgh Ceilidh Club**. A caller runs through the dance steps before the live music begins.



CATCH A SHOW

Even outside of festival season, Edinburgh has a host of great theatre venues, from the **Royal Lyceum** to **Edinburgh Playhouse**.



STAY ON THE WATER

As well as the **Royal Yacht Britannia**, Leith is also home to two floating hotels: **Fingal** and **Ocean Mist**.



OLD TOWN

CASTLES AND COBBLED STREETS

With its pleasant medieval thoroughfares and restored Reformation-era buildings, the Old Town is Edinburgh's biggest draw. And the Royal Mile, which runs like a spine down from Edinburgh Castle to the manicured lawns of the Palace of Holyroodhouse, is its most well-trodden route. When the city's wealthy merchants left the fetid and disease-ridden area in the 19th century, they left the Old Town hemmed in by two new bridges. Unable to grow outwards, it grew upwards, with multistorey tenements becoming the skyscrapers of their day.

Today, the squalor is gone but the tenements remain, giving the Royal Mile its unique character. The ground-level floors have been repurposed as everything from world-class museums to restaurants, bars and cafes – and, inevitably, as tacky souvenir stores. But above these shopfronts, a thriving city-centre community remains, along with some wonderful city views.

TOP TIP

The Old Town radiates out from the Royal Mile. Most of the neighbourhood's big-ticket attractions are either on the Mile, on its intersecting streets and alleys (like South Bridge and George IV Bridge), or on the streets below (like Grassmarket and Cowgate). You can explore the neighbourhood by foot; hills and cobbles mean comfy shoes are recommended.



IRINA CRICCA/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Gladstone's Land



Gladstone's Land

EXPERIENCE THE ROYAL MILE'S HISTORY

Immerse yourself in Edinburgh life through the ages at this six-storey tenement building-turned-immersive visitor experience. One of the oldest buildings on the Royal Mile, its history has been brought to life with a series of painstakingly recreated, era-specific rooms. Make yourself at home in a 16th-century apartment, stroll through an 18th-century draper's shop, and explore an early-20th-century boarding house – before rewarding yourself with an ice cream in the distinctly 21st-century coffee shop downstairs.



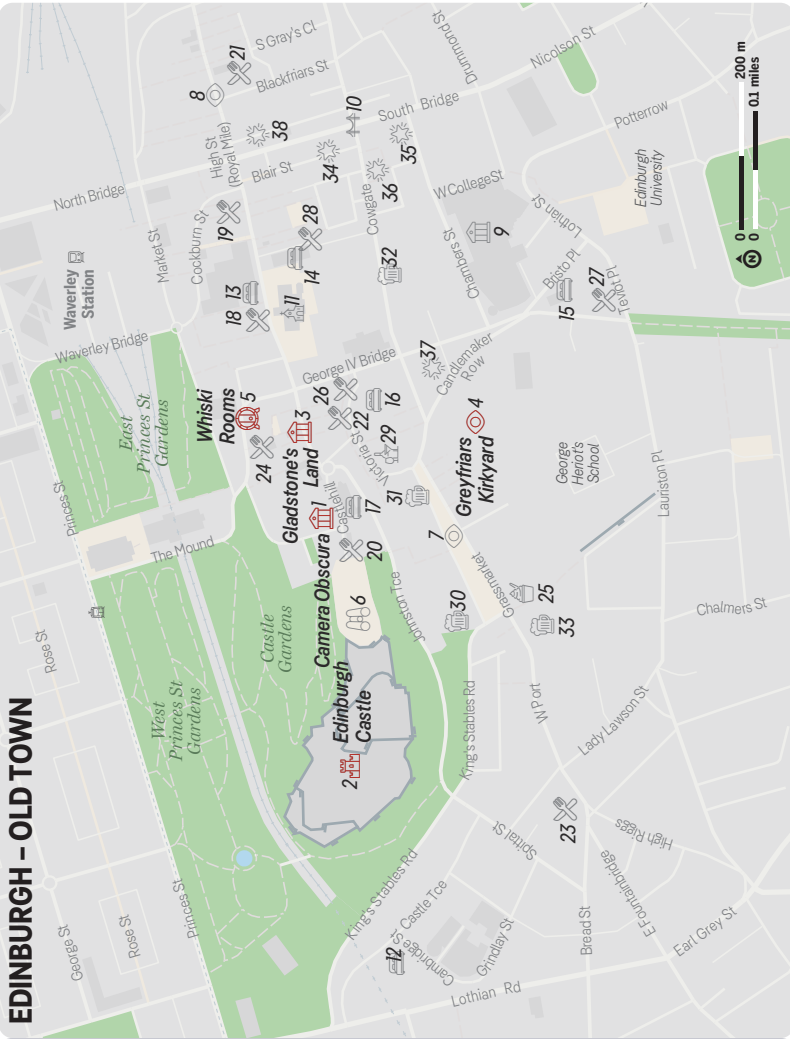
Whisky Rooms

DISCOVER THE SPIRIT OF SCOTLAND

Scotch whisky lovers flock to this excellent bar and shop on North Bank St (the road down from Lawnmarket to Princes St) for its daily whisky-tasting experiences. An expert guide explains the long history of Scotch single malts, including the different regions and their distinctive flavours, then tailors the tasting to you – whether you're a newcomer to the world of whisky or an old hand keen to sample some uncommon drams. There are also specialist whisky tastings with paired cheeses and chocolate available. Stick around for a meal in the superb restaurant, with its tempting menu of Scottish classics.



EDINBURGH – OLD TOWN



HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Camera Obscura
- 2 Edinburgh Castle
- 3 Gladstone's Land
- 4 Greyfriars Kirkyard
- 5 Whiski Rooms

SIGHTS

- 6 Castle Esplanade
- 7 Grassmarket
- 8 High St
- 9 National Museum of Scotland
- 10 South Bridge
- 11 St Giles Cathedral

SHOPPING

- 12 2 Cambridge Street
- 13 Cheval Old Town Chambers
- 14 Code - The Court
- 15 Hotel du Vin Edinburgh
- 16 Virgin Hotels Edinburgh
- 17 Witchery by the Castle

- 19 Baked Potato Shop
- 20 Cannonball Restaurant
- 21 Edinburgh Larder St
- 22 Howies Victoria St
- 23 Lovecrumbs
- 24 Makars Mash Bar
- 25 Mary's Milk Bar
- 26 Orndine
- 27 Saboteur
- 28 Wings

- 29 Bow Bar
- 30 Cold Town House
- 31 Maggie Dicksons
- 32 Three Sisters
- 33 Wee Red Bare

- 34 Cabaret Voltaire
- 35 Jazz Bar
- 36 Stramash
- 37 Under The Stairs
- 38 Whistle Binkie's

EATING

- 18 Angels with Bagpipes



CAMERA OBSCURA & WORLD OF ILLUSIONS

It may be 170 years old, but Edinburgh's bewitching camera obscura continues to baffle and delight visitors to this day – and that includes cynical teenagers. Climb up to the **Outlook Tower** for a taste of true Victorian ingenuity, as live images from the streets below are projected onto a table. Think CCTV, 19th-century style. The rest of the building is given over to hands-on exhibits showcasing a variety of optical illusions, puzzles, mirror mazes, holograms and vortex tunnels; enough to keep the kids entertained for an hour or two, but not quite matching the magic of the camera obscura above.



Greyfriars Kirkyard

AN EVOCATIVE HILLSIDE CEMETERY

Set on a hill overlooking Grassmarket, this higgledy-piggledy graveyard has uneven tombstones set around the 400-year-old **Greyfriars Kirk** (church). A few of them are surrounded by mortsafes, iron cages that were erected in the early 1800s to prevent graverobbing. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the cemetery was most famous for the story of **Greyfriars Bobby**, a faithful dog who spent 14 years guarding the grave of his departed owner, and you can still find his statue outside the entrance. However, recent years have seen greater interest in the cemetery's *Harry Potter* links, as the gravestones provided JK Rowling with inspiration for many of the series' character names. Keep an eye out for Potters, McGonagalls, Moodies and even a Thomas Riddell.



Edinburgh Castle

THE SYMBOL OF THE CITY

The most potent symbol of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh Castle has stood on the brooding crags high above the city for the best part of a millennium. From the top of the Royal Mile, walk through the wide Esplanade – built as a parade ground and now host to the annual Military Tattoo – then cross over the drawbridge and enter through the gatehouse to find yourself in the historical heart of the castle. You can easily spend half a day exploring the highlights here: the tiny 11th-century **St Margaret's Chapel**, which is the oldest building in Edinburgh; the **Crown Room**, home to the royal regalia worn by centuries of Scottish monarchs (including the Stone of Scone upon which they sat to be crowned); and the giant 15th-century siege gun **Mons Megs**, considered the height of medieval cannon construction. Make sure you save time to soak up the spectacular city views from the battlements, which on a clear day stretch all the way across the Firth of Forth.

If you're visiting Edinburgh on a weekday or a Saturday, get to the castle battlements for the firing of the One O'Clock Gun, a tradition dating back to 1861. Or, if you're just walking around town, try not to jump when it goes off.



ANASTAS STYLES/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Edinburgh Castle's Great Hall



Greyfriars Bobby

MORE IN THE OLD TOWN

Edinburgh's High Street

THE MIDDLE OF THE MILE

Drifting down from Edinburgh Castle at its western peak to Holyroodhouse Palace at its eastern base, the **Royal Mile** is Edinburgh's most strolled street. Except it isn't one street, it's five: Castlehill, Lawnmarket, High St, Canon-gate and Abbey Strand. Each has its own unique charm, but when it comes to a history-filled walking tour, it's hard to look beyond the Royal Mile's middle: High St.

Start on the corner of George IV Bridge and Lawnmarket, with the statue of Scottish Enlightenment philosopher **David Hume** on your left; he's usually accompanied by a very enthusiastic bagpiper. As you approach **St Giles Cathedral**, look down to see the **Heart of Midlothian** mosaic on the cobbled street but avoid walking on it, as residents often spit on the heart for good luck. Venture inside the church to see its ornate **Thistle Chapel**,



BEST QUICK EATS IN THE OLD TOWN

Lovecrumbs

This supremely sweet-toothed bakery-cafe serves up delectable cakes in a quirky and cosy setting. £

Edinburgh Larder

Legendary for brunches such as the hot smoked salmon, poached egg and potato 'hash'. £

Mary's Milk Bar

Creamy gelato is the order of the day at this popular ice cream parlour, where flavours change daily. £

Baked Potato Shop

The place for a warm, meat-free snack. Try a tattie filled with tasty vegan haggis. £



HEART TO HEARTS

With a crest inspired by the Royal Mile mosaic, Heart of Midlothian football club (or Hearts for short) was founded in 1874 and is still going strong. See a game at **Tynecastle Park** in the West End.



WHERE TO DRINK IN THE OLD TOWN

Three Sisters

A lively beer garden with food stalls and big screens makes this a festival favourite.

Bow Bar

One of the Royal Mile's best traditional pubs serving real ales, whiskies and gins.

Wee Red Bar

Popular with art students, this trendy bar-club is all about cheap drinks and live music.



YEAR-ROUND FESTIVALS

Edinburgh has great festivals all year round, from its Hogmanay celebrations at New Year to its International Storytelling Festival in October. Visiting for May Day? Don't miss the **Beltane Fire Festival** (p73).

HALF-HANGIT MAGGIE

The long-standing Grassmarket pub **Maggie Dicksons** is named for one of the most famous hangings that took place here. In August 1724, Maggie was hanged on the gallows and duly declared dead by a doctor. So far, so normal (for 18th-century Edinburgh). But when her body was taken away in a coffin, Maggie unexpectedly woke up. As it was deemed that her punishment had been carried out, Maggie was allowed to go free – and would live for another 40 years with the nickname Half-Hangit Maggie.



REXOLD/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Mercat Cross

including a carving of an angel playing the bagpipes. Carry on past the distinctive **Mercat Cross**, once the site of important royal proclamations, to the **Scottish Design Exchange**, where local artists sell original crafts under a church roof. Grab lunch at the bolshy Italian diner **Civerinos Hunter Sq** before crossing South Bridge to see the last small stretch of High St, including the impossibly pretty **John Knox House** and the neighbouring **Scottish Storytelling Centre**. Finish your High St tour with a pint of beer or a dram of whisky in **The World's End** pub.

Festival City

EXPERIENCING EDINBURGH IN AUGUST

You can feel it coming in late July. It's there in the sweeping of streets, the plastering of posters and the flocking of food trucks. And yet nothing can quite prepare you for when the hurricane hits in August, when the city's population swells to twice its normal size, when the Fringe flyerers and the fire-eaters fill the Royal Mile. This is festival season in Edinburgh, and it's the greatest show on earth.



WHERE TO STAY IN THE OLD TOWN

CoDe Pod – THE CoURT

Colourful, charming and cheap, this prison-turned-hostel has extremely comfy pod beds. £

2 Cambridge Street

This unique B&B is filled with vintage furnishings, art installations and other random curios. ££

Hotel du Vin Edinburgh

Victorian architecture meets modern decor at this Old Town outpost of the boutique chain. £££



Soweto Gospel Choir at Edinburgh Festival Fringe

The main attraction, of course, is the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe**, the world's largest arts festival. Over the course of three weeks, tens of thousands of performances of comedy, theatre, dance, circus, cabaret and kids' shows fill venues throughout the Old Town and beyond. Yet the Fringe is just one of several major festivals taking place here in August. There's the **Edinburgh International Festival**, with its packed programme of classical music, theatre and opera. There's the **Edinburgh International Book Festival**, which attracts big-name authors from around the world. There's the **Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo**, with its eye-popping displays of military marching bands. And there's the **Edinburgh Art Festival**, with exhibitions across the city. Five major festivals. All at once. All in one action-packed city.

As September arrives, all evidence of the festivals is packed away for another year as the city returns to normality. But anyone who experienced Edinburgh in August won't forget it in a hurry.



AN EVENING IN THE OLD TOWN



Beth Jamieson, Marketing Assistant at **Camera Obscura & World of Illusions** (p56), shares her perfect evening out in the Old Town:

One of my favourite things about this part of town is that there are amazing food spots and bars on every corner. One of my go-tos after work is **Saboteur**, a Vietnamese street-food cafe. The food is superfresh and tasty, and they even do Vietnamese coffee and juices. After this, I often take visiting friends and family to **Cold Town House** on Grassmarket. They have their own microbrewery with a great selection of beers, plus amazing cocktails and a roof terrace with stunning views of Edinburgh Castle. Later on, I'll head to **Stramash** on Cowgate for live music.

Cheval Old Town Chambers

These spacious luxury apartments with hotel-style amenities are ideal for families and longer stays. **£££**

Witchery by the Castle

Plush antique furniture and indulgent suites create one of Edinburgh's most decadent stays. **£££**

Virgin Hotels Edinburgh

Beautifully designed and centrally located, this is one of Edinburgh's best new luxury options. **£££**

Beneath the Castle

EXPLORING THE GORY GRASSMARKET

It may have started life as a medieval marketplace for cattle and livestock, but **Grassmarket's** history is long and bloody. Start your two-hour walking tour of Edinburgh's underbelly on the Royal Mile. As you descend the steep

Castle Wynd steps, look for the **cannonball** lodged in the wall; legend has it that this was fired at Bonnie Prince Charlie by government troops.

You'll emerge in the middle of the Grassmarket, 90m from the **cobbled cross** that marks where the gallows once stood. Hundreds were executed on this site over the centuries, including Covenanters who supported a Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Aside from macabre pun pub names like the **Last Drop**, there's little remaining evidence of this grim history – in fact, the Grassmarket of today is a lovely place to stroll, with great pubs, ice cream parlours and market stalls.

For a nice view up to the castle, climb the **Venel Steps** across the square. Loop back up to the start by walking up the colourful, shop-lined **Victoria Street**; a staircase halfway up leads directly to the Royal Mile, where you can finish your tour with a dram at the **Scotch Whisky Experience**. Stairs a challenge? The Royal Mile and Grassmarket are connected via George IV Bridge and Victoria St without a step in sight.



LEWIS CHESS PIECES

The National Museum of Scotland is home to 11 of the magnificent Lewis chess pieces, a set of medieval chess pieces carved from walrus ivory. Another six can be found on display at the **Museum nan Eilean** (p322) in Stornoway.



BEST VIEWS IN THE OLD TOWN

National Museum of Scotland

The rooftop terrace here offers far-reaching vistas of Edinburgh Castle and the city below.

Castle Esplanade

On a clear day you can see out to Leith and beyond from this viewpoint.

St Giles Cathedral

Accessible by guided tour, the church's roof offers great views along the Royal Mile.

Hello, Dolly!

MEET THE FIRST CLONED MAMMAL

When it comes to famous sheep, there's one in particular that stands out from the flock. And no kids, it isn't Shaun. On 5 July 1996, history was made at the Roslin Institute (just outside Edinburgh) with the birth of Dolly the sheep, the first mammal ever cloned from an adult somatic cell. It was the scientific breakthrough of the decade, since leading to huge advancements in stem cell research. Following her death in 2003, Dolly was preserved by taxidermy and put on display at the **National Museum of Scotland**. So if you want a selfie with an era-defining celebrity, you know where to go.



WHERE TO EAT IN THE OLD TOWN

Makars Mash Bar

Simple food done well: mashed potato served with lamb, sausages, mushrooms or veggie haggis. £

Wings

Edinburgh's best chicken wing place. All you need to do is choose your sauce. £

Howies Victoria Street

Come for the bargain lunch menu of seasonal Scottish fare, from salmon to venison. ££



National Museum of Scotland

A Hidden World

DISCOVER EDINBURGH'S ILLICIT UNDERGROUND

With its shops, restaurants and theatres, **South Bridge** looks like any other Old Town street. But as you turn off at Hunter Sq and start to descend, the penny drops: 'It actually is a bridge!' Built in the 1780s, the overpass spans more than 300m and has 19 stone arches – continue down from Hunter Sq and you'll arrive at one of them. The question is: where are the rest?

That's where **Mercat Tours** (mercattours.com) comes in. A storytelling guide leads you behind the shopfronts and into the hidden, historical arches (or 'vaults') of the South Bridge. Take your pick from a series of themed, 75-minute tours: you can dig into the social history and architecture of the bridge; learn about the grave-robbers, torturers and murderers that skulked in the darkness of this subterranean realm; or hear tales of the ghosts and ghouls that haunt the vaults to this day.



BEST UNDERGROUND BARS IN THE OLD TOWN

Whistle Binkies

In the bowels of South Bridge, this atmospheric bar hosts live rock and blues bands.

Under the Stairs

Inventive seasonal cocktails and superb bistro food are served in this quirky, shabby-chic lounge bar.

Jazz Bar

There's an ever-changing line-up of blues, funk and Latin jazz bands at this subterranean venue.

Cabaret Voltaire

Dance, house and techno music bounces off the walls and ceilings of this basement club.



UNDERGROUND ALL AROUND

It's not just the Old Town that has great below-ground-level bars. Try **32 Below** (p94) in South Edinburgh, **Panda & Sons** (p72) in the New Town and **Heads & Tales Bar** in the West End.

Cannonball Restaurant

Delicious Italian cuisine is served in this chic but informal restaurant by the castle. **££**

Angels with Bagpipes

This popular Royal Mile restaurant serves high-quality Scottish cuisine with inventive twists. **££**

Ondine

Sample the best oysters in Edinburgh at this superb Scottish fish and seafood restaurant. **£££**

HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT

HISTORY AND HILL WALKING

Encompassing everything from the lower reaches of the Royal Mile to the sprawling natural terrain of its namesake park, Holyrood is a neighbourhood of vastly contrasting eras. The 21st century is represented by the modernist Scottish Parliament Building, as well as the futuristic science centre Dynamic Earth. The remnants of medieval Edinburgh are found in the sloping street of Canongate and the ruins of Holyrood Abbey. And the earliest beginnings of Edinburgh can be found in Arthur's Seat, an ancient volcano that has been watching over this corner of Scotland since before the age of the dinosaurs.

Many of the attractions in Holyrood are both old and new, repeatedly formed and reformed across generations. It is a place where the modern and the ancient intertwine – and that makes it one of Edinburgh's most fascinating neighbourhoods.

TOP TIP

Holyrood is dominated by Arthur's Seat, but most of the neighbourhood's biggest sights, restaurants and bars can be found on Canongate at the eastern end of the Royal Mile – as well as on the parallel Holyrood Rd. Around 45 minutes' walk across the park from here is charming Duddingston village.



LEFT: TOMAS MAREK/SHUTTERSTOCK © RIGHT: CHRISORNE/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Dynamic Earth
- 2 Palace of Holyroodhouse
- 3 Scottish Parliament Building

SIGHTS

- 4 Arthur's Seat
- 5 Canongate Kirkyard
- 6 Holyrood Abbey
- 7 St Anthony's Chapel

EATING

- 8 David Bann
- 9 Moo Pie Gelato
- 10 Oink Cannongate
- 11 Pakora Bar

PIGGS

- 13 Wedgwood the Restaurant

DRINKING

- 14 BrewDog Doghouse
- 15 Cadenhead's Whisky Shop
- 16 Canons Gait
- 17 Cocktail Geeks
- 18 Holyrood 9A
- 19 Holyrood Distillery
- 20 Jeffrey St
- 21 Kildarkin
- 22 Tolbooth Tavern
- 23 White Horse Oyster & Seafood Bar

Canongate Kirk (p67)

63

EDINBURGH

THE GUIDE



Dynamic Earth

BRINGING SCIENCE TO LIFE

This family-friendly **science museum** is divided into a dozen gallery spaces, with each focused on a different era of the planet's geological history, from the Big Bang to the formation of the polar ice caps. Kids will love exploring the depths of the ocean in a (yellow) submarine, while adults will be agog at the planetarium, complete with startlingly high-quality 3D imagery and booming surround sound. Don't leave without visiting the gift shop, full of educational toys, books and games for budding scientists.



Dynamic Earth



Scottish Parliament Building

IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Conceived by Catalan architect Enric Miralles and completed by his widow Benedetta Tagliabue, it's a brazenly modern construction of polished concrete, granite and steel, without a neo-Gothic clock tower in sight. Few passers-by are immediately convinced by its starkly out-of-place exterior, but venture inside and you may just change your mind. The lobby is a playful space of concrete pillars, oak panels, glass walls and eye-catching works of art. Join a guided tour to walk the sloping corridors, see the debating chamber and learn more about the architect's intentions of creating a building to represent a national identity.



Scottish Parliament Building



Palace of Holyroodhouse

POWER, POLITICS AND MURDER

Mary, Queen of Scots only lived here for half a decade, but it was an eventful time. First, there was the murder of her private secretary (and supposed lover) David Rizzio by her second husband, Lord Darnley. Then came Darnley's murder, and Mary's marriage to his alleged killer Lord Bothwell. This led to an uprising, Mary's imprisonment and abdication. She then fled south to seek protection from Queen Elizabeth I, who later had her beheaded. Visitors can see Mary's Bedchamber and the Royal Apartments, as well as the palace gardens and ruined Holyrood Abbey, with a self-guided audio tour.

NEIL BUSSEY/SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Arthur's Seat



WHISKY GALORE

Holyrood Distillery may have been the first Edinburgh distillery for a century, but it already has some local competition. Bonnington Distillery opened in March 2020, while **Port of Leith Distillery** (p84) is due to open in spring 2023.


BEST WHISKY PLACES IN HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT
Jeffrey St

This place offers a host of whisky experiences, from region-by-region tastings to straight-from-the-cask samplings.

Cadenhead's Whisky Shop

Try before you buy with a tasting session at this long-standing Royal Mile whisky outlet.

Kilderkin

Prefer sipping a dram in a pub? The bar here is stacked high with Scotch.

MORE IN HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT
The Roof of the City

HIKE TO EDINBURGH'S HIGHEST POINT

An unmistakable feature of the Edinburgh skyline, the craggy, gorse-covered **Arthur's Seat** rises up behind the towers of the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Earn your porridge with a 45-minute climb to its 251m summit.

The trail starts across from the car park on Queen's Dr, and gently climbs up and away from the road. Take a short diversion to see the medieval ruins of St Anthony's Chapel, including fine views towards North Edinburgh, before doubling back and continuing your way into the heart of


WHERE TO EAT IN HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT
Oink Canongate

Founded by local farmers, the hog roast (pulled pork) rolls here are outrageously tasty. £

Pakora Bar

This great little Punjabi place has haggis pakora wraps and veggie samosas to go. £

Moo Pie Gelato

Enjoy Italian-style ice cream in various creative flavours, from milk stout to brown toast. £

AFTER-WORK DRINKS IN HOLYROOD



Paul Wedgwood, one of Scotland's leading chefs and owner of **Wedgwood the Restaurant**, shares his favourite Holyrood spots for after-work drinks.

Holyrood 9A

Impressive craft beer, with taps on rotation featuring the best from Scottish breweries and afar. Fancy something stronger? Their whisky selection is great too.

Cocktail Geeks

This bar is really fun and different. I love their cocktail selection, as there's always something unexpected and entertaining on offer, such as drinks themed around the TV show *Stranger Things*.

White Horse Oyster & Seafood Bar

I go here every year with my team around New Year's Eve. The best seat in the house is at the bar, where you can sip on chilled champagne and watch oysters get shucked right in front of you.

Holyrood Park. Divert left off the main trail onto a narrower path, which becomes increasingly steep and rocky as it approaches a plateau – a chance to catch your breath while looking over pretty Dunsapie Loch. From here, a final 10-minute push along the mountain ridge brings you to the top of the hill. Drink in the marvellous city panorama before heading back the way you came. Sadly, the alternative route down (the Radical Rd via Salisbury Crags) is closed for the foreseeable future because of rockfalls.

The City Centre Distillery

DISCOVER HOW WHISKY IS MADE

Whisky production has a long and storied history in Edinburgh, from the first distilling rights granted in 1505 to the Guild of Barbers and Surgeons to the estimated 400 illicit stills in operation across the city in the 1700s. Yet when **Holyrood Distillery** opened its doors in 2019, it was the first single malt distillery anywhere in Edinburgh for almost a century. While the world is still waiting for the whisky to mature in its oak casks, visitors can go for a guided tour at the distillery's shiny new visitor centre.

The crowd here is younger and hipper than at most distilleries, perhaps due to its location on the edge of studenty Southside. The tour guides are young too, some fresh from distilling courses at the city's Heriot-Watt University – although they expertly and passionately walk their guests through the whisky-making process, from malting to mashing to maturation. The experience ends in the tasting room, with a chance to try the new-make spirit fresh off the still, as well as the distillery's Height of Arrows gin – a translation of the Gaelic phrase *Àrd-na-Said* (which may just be the origin for Arthur's Seat). End your experience with a drink and some street food in the pleasant south-facing courtyard.

The Other Side of Holyrood Park

EDINBURGH'S FORGOTTEN VILLAGE

When people talk of Edinburgh's illustrious history, one small corner of the city is often overlooked. Tucked away behind Arthur's Seat is the small village of **Duddingston**, founded in the 1100s and said to be named after the Norman knight Dodin de Duddingstoun. Now part of Edinburgh, but still with the aura of a rural Scottish village, Duddingston can lay claim to some of the city's oldest buildings.



WHERE TO EAT IN HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT

David Bann

Serving inventive and beautifully presented dishes, this is Edinburgh's best vegetarian restaurant. **££**

PIGGS

Expect tasty tapas and fine Spanish wine in this tiny, six-table Royal Mile restaurant. **££**

Wedgwood the Restaurant

First-class fine dining without the fuss; the good-value lunch menu changes with the seasons. **£££**

WOOLVER/SHUTTERSTOCK ©



Holyrood Distillery



SEE THE DEAN

It isn't just Duddingston: for another quiet corner of the Scottish capital that retains all the character and charm of a country village, head to **Dean Village** (p77) in the West End.

BEST CHURCHES
IN HOLYROOD &
ARTHUR'S SEAT**Holyrood Abbey**

In the Palace of Holyroodhouse grounds, these ruins were once one of Europe's grandest abbeys.

Canongate Kirk

This unusual-looking church (and cemetery full of famous locals) was a favourite of the Queen.

St Anthony's Chapel

A popular stop on the way up Arthur's Seat, offering great views of Leith.



WHERE TO DRINK IN HOLYROOD & ARTHUR'S SEAT

Canons' Gait

This Royal Mile favourite has a good selection of ales and unfalteringly friendly service.

BrewDog Doghouse

There's craft beer galore from the 30 taps here. Overindulged? Check into the on-site hotel.

Tolbooth Tavern

This traditional stone-walled pub has 200 years of experience serving good beer and food.

NEW TOWN

SHOP-LINED GEORGIAN STREETS

While a relative youngster when compared to Edinburgh's Old Town, the New Town was founded more than 250 years ago. The project was proposed by the city's elite as a plan to break away from the confines of the Old Town. The aim was to create an idyllic modern city; a paradise of wide-open streets, well-proportioned squares and classically inspired architecture, all set along an elegant grid pattern. And it was a big success. The New Town has since grown but its core remains, with many of its original neoclassical buildings now home to five-star hotels, swanky restaurants, chic cocktail bars and world-class art galleries.

Today, the New Town is probably best known for two things: strolling and shopping. Explore Princes St Gardens and Calton Hill for two very different but equally memorable views of Edinburgh Castle. In the past, Princes St itself was the area's main shopping boulevard, but that mantle has now passed to the smaller streets around – visit George St for upscale fashion, Rose St and Thistle St for quirky designer boutiques, Dundas St for antiques and St James Quarter mall for the big brands.

TOP TIP

Princes St is the main entry point of the New Town, whether arriving by train, bus, tram or just walking down the Mound from the Old Town. Running parallel to the north are (in order) Rose St, George St, Thistle St and Queen St. The whole neighbourhood is easily explored on foot.



RICHIE CHAN/SHUTTERSTOCK ©



HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Moray Place
- 2 Scottish National Portrait Gallery
- 3 St James Quarter

SIGHTS

- 4 Catherine Sinclair Monument
- 5 Dr Thomas Chalmers Statue
- 6 George St
- 7 National Monument of Scotland
- 8 Nelson Monument
- 9 Princes Street Gardens

DRINKING

- 23 Café Royal
- 24 CC Blooms Drinking
- 25 Guildford Arms
- 26 Habana
- 27 Johnnie Walker Experience

SLEEPING

- 10 14 Hart Street
- 11 Balmoral Hotel
- 12 Braid Apartments
- 13 Glasshouse Kitchen

EATING

- 14 21212
- 15 Baba
- 16 Dishoom
- 17 Dusit
- 18 Florio
- 19 Fortitude
- 20 Greenwood
- 21 Noto
- 22 Urban Angel



Portrait of James
Bruce, Scottish
National Portrait
Gallery



Scottish National Portrait Gallery

THRILLING DECOR AND
FAMOUS FACES

This exceptional free-to-visit art gallery is tucked away on Queen St, just around the corner from St Andrew Sq. The 19th-century building itself is a work of art, with a beautiful Spanish Gothic facade complete with sculpted figures of notable Scots, as well as an Arts and Crafts interior of gilded friezes, colourful murals and polished marble floors. The collection here includes thousands of paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings and photographs from the Renaissance to the present day.



St James Quarter

SWANKY SHOPPING CENTRE

When it opened in summer 2021, this vast **shopping complex** fundamentally changed the skyline of the New Town. Located between Princes St and Leith Walk, the building is mostly given over to big-name retail outlets, but it's the distinctive, 12-storey central tower – home to the W Edinburgh hotel – that really stands out, thanks to a unique ribbon design that makes it look like a giant Walnut Whip. Head to the 4th-floor Scottish Marketplace to try food from some local indie restaurants.



LEFT: JOHN LAWSON, BELHAVEN/GETTY IMAGES © TOP LEFT: DEAGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES ©

Moray Place



Moray Place

FINE GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE

Considered a masterpiece of 19th-century urban planning, this circular – well, technically speaking, dodecagonal – development is one of the New Town's prettiest corners. Laid out in 1822 by the Earl of Moray, it comprises a series of expansive town houses with curved facades, elaborate porticoes and large windows, all set around a secluded residents-only garden. Over the years it has been home to the city's rich and famous – and it still is. Stroll around for an insight into an Edinburgh from the past. From Moray Pl, it's just a short walk down to the Water of Leith and the pretty St Bernard's Well.

SHAITH/GETTY IMAGES ©



Scott Monument

MORE IN THE NEW TOWN

Manicured Lawns & Museums

STROLLING PRINCES STREET GARDENS

Laid out in the 1820s after the draining of a loch below the castle, these lovely, landscaped gardens offer green respite from the hubbub of Princes St to the north and the Royal Mile to the south.

Enter **East Princes Street Gardens** from the corner of Waverley Bridge and the first thing you'll spot is the gargantuan Gothic sculpture that looks like a severed cathedral spire. The **Scott Monument** is dedicated to historical novelist Sir Walter Scott, with an exterior covered in carvings of characters from his novels. Climb the 287 steps to the top for a delightful view of the New Town and beyond.

From here, it's a short walk west to the **Scottish National Gallery**, an imposing classical building with an impressive collection of European art. Look for Vincent van Gogh's *Head of a Peasant Woman*; in summer 2022, a previously unknown self-portrait of the artist was found hidden on the back of it.

Cross the Mound and enter **West Princes Street Gardens** by a quaint **Floral Clock** – it's been here since 1903, though



BEST MONUMENTS IN THE NEW TOWN

Dr Thomas Chalmers Statue

This sculpture on George St commemorates the first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland.

Nelson Monument

This 30m-high Calton Hill tower has a time ball that drops at 1pm every day.

National Monument of Scotland

Also on Calton Hill, this unfinished Parthenon-like monument is known as 'Scotland's Folly'.

Catherine Sinclair Monument

Like a miniature Scott Monument, this stone sculpture celebrates the 19th-century novelist and philanthropist.



BEST BARS IN THE NEW TOWN

Guildford Arms

One of Edinburgh's prettiest pubs: all wood panels and elegant plasterwork. The beer's good too.

Juniper

Sip imaginative cocktails (like peaty whisky with peach iced tea) in a colourful, plant-filled interior.

Joseph Pearce's

This Swedish bar at the top of Leith Walk serves craft beers and Scandi-themed cocktails.



GO GREEN!

It's not just the New Town: Edinburgh is a city of green spaces. Schedule in a visit to the **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh** (p82) in Stockbridge, the **Meadows** (p91) in Southside and **Dr Neil's Garden** (p67) in Duddingston Village.

WHERE TO STAY IN THE NEW TOWN

14 Hart Street

Centrally located but quiet, the family-friendly B&B is set within a charming Georgian building. **££**

Braid Apartments

These stylish and spacious self-service apartments offer a more flexible alternative to a hotel. **£££**

Glasshouse

Chic, modern and luxurious, this beautiful boutique hotel is renowned for its elegant rooftop garden. **£££**

Balmoral

Beautiful rooms, great views and top-drawer restaurants make this one of Edinburgh's most luxurious stays. **£££**



Ross Fountain

the design changes every year. Follow the path past the charming **Wojtek the Soldier Bear Memorial** towards the grand, turquoise-coloured **Ross Fountain**. Stop for a drink in the **Fountain Café**, then climb the steps to St Cuthbert's Church to see the statue of **Bum the Dog**, the San Diego cousin of Edinburgh's Greyfriars Bobby.

Boutiques & Bistros

EXPLORING GEORGE STREET

The last few years haven't been kind to Princes St. Once the city's go-to place for retail therapy, the road has witnessed the closure of several big-name shops, including the Victorian department store Jenners, and an increase in budget outlets and boarded-up shopfronts. Luckily, there's another equally historic, less-busy and soon-to-be pedestrianised shopping street a two-minute walk away.

George Street is a grand avenue of Georgian and Victorian architecture, bookended by two elegant garden squares. Start at St Andrew Sq and head west, criss-crossing the street to venture into any outlets that catch your eye. Up-market brands such as Jo Malone, Hawes & Curtis and



BEST BARS IN THE NEW TOWN

Café Royal Circle Bar

Ornate Victorian interiors, good whisky and tasty bar food make this a New Town favourite.

Panda & Sons

This easily missed, Prohibition-style speakeasy is tucked away behind a fake barbershop exterior.

Kay's Bar

Tiny, cosy and very friendly, this coach house-turned-local pub has an extensive whisky selection.



ROX Jewellery mingle with various independent fashion boutiques (including Scottish Design Exchange, a showcase of local producers). Craft coffee shops and excellent restaurants offer the chance to drop your bags for a while, before Charlotte Sq signals the end of George St – and the start of the West End.

Bringing Whisky to Life

EXPERIENCE JOHNNIE WALKER PRINCES STREET

For some, a Scotch whisky experience means nursing a dram in a quiet corner of a Victorian pub. But the Scotch whisky experience here is a different beast: brash, bombastic and, well, frankly, bonkers.

Part animated history lesson, part interactive theatre show, and part theme-park extravaganza, this no-holds-barred £150 million ‘tourist experience’ is an all-singing, all-dancing introduction to the life and times of Mr **Johnnie Walker**. It starts slowly with a questionnaire (which is designed to work out your flavour preferences) but then the real fun begins, with the start of the immersive, full-sensory Journey of Flavour tour. The highlight is a storytelling segment in which actors recount the brand’s long journey from a humble grocer’s shop to the world’s best-selling Scotch, but the entire thing is an all-consuming experience of energetic live performances, top-drawer visual effects and eardrum-splitting soundscapes. After an hour or so you emerge blinking into a tranquil tasting room, where a choice of whiskies and cocktails (tailored to your earlier flavour preferences) await. It’s a pleasingly quiet and old-fashioned way to end one of the most intense Scotch whisky experiences you’ll ever have – and, with three whisky drinks included in the £28 tour, worth the cost of admission alone.

Fire & Rebirth

CALTON HILL'S BELTANE FESTIVAL

The drums start beating, the torch flames are lit and the wedding procession begins. Resplendent in white and with a crown of flowers, the May Queen leads her consorts and warrior women to meet the Green Man, and together they proceed through the crowd. So begins the **Beltane Fire Festival**.

From the Fringe to Hogmanay, Edinburgh is a city that’s famous for its festivals – and yet this one is often overlooked. It’s inspired by the ancient Gaelic festival of Beltane, one of four Iron Age Celtic rituals that observe the changing of the seasons. Celebrated on the evening before 1 May,

A FOODIE DAY IN THE NEW TOWN



Iain McPherson, owner of Panda & Sons cocktail bar, shares his perfect foodie day in the New Town.

Greenwoods

Start your day with brunch at Greenwoods. It has really hearty and rustic food, plus great service. There are all the usual contenders, like eggs Benedict, and plenty of other interesting dishes too – making it extremely difficult to choose!

Fortitude

Coffee, simple. There’s great service and great decor too. You’ll quite often find me in here grabbing a drink and catching up on a bit of work.

Noto

Edinburgh is full of great independent restaurants for dinner, and Noto is right up there. It is my favourite way to eat – fill the table with seriously tasty smaller dishes and share. The warm crab butter dish is a must-try.



BEST RESTAURANTS IN THE NEW TOWN

Urban Angel

Organic, locally sourced produce is placed front and centre in this excellent little deli-cafe. £

BABA

Enjoy lip-smacking mezze and other Middle Eastern fare in this bohemian Kimpton Hotel restaurant. ££

Dusit

This authentic yet avant-garde Thai restaurant serves tasty soups, stir-fries and seafood. ££





MORE WHISKY FUN

Looking for another unusual whisky-related attraction? Try the **Scotch Whisky Experience** (p60) at the top of the Royal Mile, which includes a roller-coaster-style ride in a whisky barrel-shaped car.



LGBTIQ+ BARS IN THE NEW TOWN

Edinburgh has a small but long-established LGBTQ+ scene. Most of the bars and clubs are centred around Broughton St and the top of Leith Walk (aka 'the Pink Triangle') at the eastern edge of New Town – and Greenside Pl has three of the most popular. The first is **CC Blooms**, a mainstay of Edinburgh's gay scene since the early 1990s, with its two floors playing a mix of dance and disco music – as well as hosting the odd cabaret night. Right next door is **Habana**, a friendly cafe-bar by day and a sweaty club-lounge by night. And just a few doors down the road is **Planet Bar & Kitchen**, a lively and colourful gay bar known for its karaoke, bingo and Showtime Friday drag queen shows.



ANDY BUCHANAN/APP/GETTY IMAGES ©

Beltane Fire Festival

Beltane marked the arrival of summer with the building of a giant bonfire – a symbol of purification – which in turn would be used to light the smaller hearth fires in people's homes. Today, the hearths are gone but the bonfire remains as the climax to a three-hour show. Leading up to this point is an extravaganza of music, dance, theatre and mischief, as the wedding characters parade across the hill and interact with the crowd (watch out for the snarling Reds, signifiers of the chaos in nature). Eventually, they all congregate at the bonfire to mark the start of summer. As the flames lick higher, the music grows louder and the dancing begins; sensitive souls should beware that some revellers may feel the need to get naked.



BEST RESTAURANTS IN THE NEW TOWN

Dishoom

Enjoy delicious tapas-style vegetarian, meat and seafood dishes in a 1920s-era Bombay setting. **££**

Fhior

Feeling flush? Treat yourself to a tasting menu of sublime, seasonal Scandi-Scottish cuisine. **£££**

21212

An experimental and theatrical dining experience is guaranteed at this fine-dining restaurant. **£££**

THE GUIDE

EDINBURGH

Edinburgh's Unesco World Heritage Site is comprised of three neighbourhoods: the Old Town, the New Town and the West End. Yet the last of that trinity gets a lot less attention from most visitors than the others. With its crescents of Georgian terraced houses, lush green parks and gardens, and a whole host of art museums, music venues and boutique shops, it's time to reconsider the West End.

In the neighbourhood's north, there's the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, a world-class collection of contemporary art set within immaculate gardens. There's also Dean Village, an ideal starting point for a stroll along the Water of Leith. To the east there are fine hotels, restaurants and bars, plus some of Edinburgh's best live music venues. In the centre and to the south there's great shopping, and to the west are some of Edinburgh's most charming suburban Georgian landscapes. And the exploration doesn't end there: the West End is also a great base for visiting further-flung sights, such as Murrayfield Stadium, Corstorphine Hill and Edinburgh Zoo.

Shandwick Pl is the West End's main point of entry, with most attractions lying to the north and west of here (although popular Lothian Rd lies to the southeast). You can easily explore the West End and Dean Village by foot, though you will want a tram or bus to visit Edinburgh Zoo.



- 1 Edinburgh Gin Distillery
- 2 Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art - Modern One
- 3 Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art - Modern Two
- 4 St Mary's Cathedral

5 Horse & Rider
6 UNIONgallery
SLEEPING
7 Dunstane Houses
8 Victorian Town House
9 Waldorf Astoria
 Edinburgh – The
 Caledonian

10 Bread Meats Bread
11 Grazing by Mark
Greenaway
12 Laura's Kitchen
13 Painted Rooster
14 Vietnam House Café
DRINKING
15 Constable Coffee
16 Jolly Botanist

ENTERTAINMENT
18 Ghillie Dhu
19 Rat Pack
20 Usher Hall
TRANSPORT
21 Hanging Bat



St Mary's Cathedral

EDINBURGH'S TALLEST BUILDING

With its 90m-high Gothic spire soaring above the skyline of Edinburgh's West End, this is one of the city's most striking churches – both outside and in. When St Giles Cathedral on the Royal Mile became exclusively Presbyterian, the city's Episcopalians needed a new place to worship, which led to the building of St Mary's in the 1870s. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott (of London's Albert Memorial fame), it's known for its striking Paolozzi Window, a riot of colour when the afternoon sun shines through.



St Mary's Cathedral



Edinburgh Gin Distillery

MOVE OVER WHISKY

An early player in the gin revolution of the 2010s, Edinburgh Gin started life as a small operation in the West End with just two copper stills, Flora and Caledonia. Today, it's a big-name brand, with a large

production facility in Leith, but visitors can still come to the original West End location for a tour and tasting – and even the chance to make their own gin. Try the distinctive Seaside Gin, made using coastal botanicals,

or opt for the delicious Rhubarb and Ginger Liqueur. There are also small-batch experimental gins and gin-based cocktails available to try at the onsite Heads and Tales bar.



LEFT POSTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK © BOTTOM LEFT PHILIPININI/GETTY IMAGES ©

MODERN TWO, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art



Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

ARTWORKS FROM PICASSO TO MAGRITTE

As famous for its perfectly manicured gardens as for the works of art inside its 19th-century buildings, this is one of the UK's most appealing modern art galleries. The collection here is divided into two neighbouring neoclassical buildings. The first, **MODERN ONE**, is home to the bulk of the permanent collection, which includes works by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol and Tracey Emin. The second, **MODERN TWO**, is known for its collection of surrealist works by masters such as Salvador Dalí and Rene Magritte, as well as its temporary exhibitions. Both buildings are set within parks that have outdoor sculptures by the likes of Henry Moore, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Nathan Coley. There's a regular bus that shuttles between here and the National Gallery on Princes St.



Dean Village

MORE IN WEST END & BEYOND

An Inner-City Oasis

DISCOVERING DEAN VILLAGE

As you reach the busy intersection of Princes St and Lothian Rd – a confluence of cars, trams, buses and pedestrians – it's hard to imagine just how close you are to tranquillity. But walk for five minutes up Queensferry Rd and you'll reach tiny Bells Brae, where the tarmac turns to cobbles and the clock turns back to a time of stone-built buildings and watermills. Welcome to **Dean Village**.

Originally founded as a small milling community in the 12th century, this out-of-time place reveals a whole other side to Edinburgh. As you approach the bottom of Bells Brae, take a sharp right onto the narrow Miller Row path and follow it for magnificent views of an imposing 19th-century viaduct (now the **Dean Bridge**), as well as the Gothic rooftop of Rhema Church. Continue through a wooded path to **St Bernard's Well**, a striking 18th-century structure with

THE BEST ART IN WEST END & BEYOND

Horse & Rider

Hidden among office buildings, this evocative sculpture depicts a man wrestling with a rearing horse.

UNIONgallery

This small gallery and art shop showcases work by local artist Alison Auldjo and others.

Jupiter Artland

This giant sculpture park west of Edinburgh has artworks by Anthony Gormley and Anish Kapoor.



WHERE TO STAY IN WEST END & BEYOND

Victorian Town House

This charming little B&B with spacious rooms sits on a peaceful, green crescent. **££**

Dunstane Houses

Conveniently located for Murrayfield, this deluxe boutique hotel offers beautiful rooms and excellent food. **£££**

Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – the Caledonian

A real institution, 'The Caley' is one of Edinburgh's most luxurious (and expensive) hotels. **£££**



BEST COFFEE IN WEST END & BEYOND

Constable Coffee

This antique police box-turned-coffee shop will thrill *Doctor Who* fans and caffeine fiends alike.

Laura's Kitchen

Good-quality coffee, hearty breakfasts and takeaway snacks make this a William St staple.

Vietnam House Café

Enjoy traditional Vietnamese coffee, food, paintings and handicrafts in this unique art gallery-café.



STU FORSTER/GETTY IMAGES ©

Six Nations rugby match, Murrayfield

a mosaic ceiling enclosing a natural spring, before turning back the way you came to reach Hawthornbank Lane, with its quaint stone buildings and bright flowerboxes. Stand on the metal bridge and you'll be rewarded with a postcard-worthy pastoral village scene of colourful half-timbered houses and lush green trees lining a lovely stretch of river. When you're ready, continue west along the Water of Leith to the National Gallery of Modern Art, or follow Hawthornbank Lane as it climbs back up to Belford Road and back into the West End.



WHERE TO LISTEN TO LIVE MUSIC IN WEST END & BEYOND

Rat Pack

As popular for its cocktails as its music, this piano bar has performances most nights.

Usher Hall

A grand concert venue hosting everything from rock and pop to the national orchestra.

Ghillie Dhu

Expect traditional Scottish music and regular *ceilidh* dances within a beautiful vaulted Georgian hall.



On the March

JOIN THE PENGUIN PARADE

Since **Edinburgh Zoo** was founded in 1913, penguins have always been the star of the show. The first three king penguins arrived in Edinburgh that same year – the first to be seen anywhere in Europe – and caused a sensation. Successful breeding has ensured that there have been penguins in residence ever since, although things nearly went very wrong in 1951, when a keeper accidentally left a gate to the enclosure open. A line of gentoo penguins duly escaped – but instead of fleeing the zoo, they simply waddled around in single file, delighting the crowds and originating a much-loved tradition.

The **Penguin Parade** is one of Edinburgh Zoo's most popular events. Every day at 2.15pm, resident penguins – now a mix of king, gentoo and rockhopper colonies – are allowed out of their enclosures to stretch their legs with a walk around the grounds. With people lining the route, the 70-year-old tradition remains a family favourite and ensures that penguins are still top billing here; though it's a close-run thing with their fellow black-and-white stars, the giant pandas Yang Guang and Tian Tian.

Crouch, Bind, Set

WATCHING THE RUGBY AT MURRAYFIELD

It's the wall of sound that hits you. When the Scotland national rugby team takes to the field before a big game, the roar of the crowd fills your ears, raises the hairs on your neck and pulses down your spine. It's an extraordinary noise. And then comes another, as a lone bagpiper plays the first strains of the national anthem 'Flower of Scotland', before 67,000 fiercely proud Scots pick up the mantle...

Watching a game of rugby at **Murrayfield** is a total sensory experience. Come in February and early March for games at the Six Nations Championship, when Scotland battle it out with England, Wales, Ireland, France and Italy for European bragging rights. Scotland have yet to win it – their last victory was at the 1999 Five Nations, before Italy joined the party – but they've regularly beaten the 'Auld Enemy' England to claim the Calcutta Cup, which is almost as sweet. There are also big international games in October and November, as part of the Autumn Nations series. Can't make it to a game? Take the Murrayfield Stadium tour (11am daily, except Sundays) to get a feel for the place from pitch side.



BEST BARS IN WEST END & BEYOND

Hanging Bat

This stylish, modern Lothian Rd bar is all about craft beers, from IPAs to porters.

Jolly Botanist

Choose from more than 70 gins from around the world in this quirky cocktail bar.

Teuchters Bar & Bunker

A great whisky selection makes this pub popular with rugby fans heading to Murrayfield.

Athletic Arms

Founded by gravediggers, this traditional pub has decor that's barely changed in a century.



WHERE TO EAT IN WEST END & BEYOND

Painted Rooster

A cheerful and unfussy lunch option, with tasty soups, bagels and superb homemade cakes. £

Bread Meats Bread

One of Edinburgh's best burger places, known for unusual toppings such as pastrami and kimchi. ££

Grazing by Mark Greenaway

Expect high-quality bistro fare with a twist in this exceptional (and expensive) hotel restaurant. £££





STOCKBRIDGE

FOOD MARKETS AND GARDENS

Standing proudly apart from the neighbouring New Town, this quiet and quirky district is a haven of the bohemian set, with its host of craft coffee shops, artisan delis, swanky wine bars and gastropub restaurants. It's also a destination for shopping, from independent bookshops to fashion boutiques and countless charity and vintage shops. What's more, Stockbridge is home to one of the city's best farmers markets, with a particular focus on fresh, organic and vegan produce.

Perhaps Stockbridge's biggest draws are its green spaces. To the northwest is Inverleith Park, a 22-hectare square of lawns and gardens with views across town to Edinburgh Castle. To the northeast is the even-larger Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. And winding right through the heart of Stockbridge is the leafy Water of Leith, offering picturesque riverside walks, as well as easy access to everything from Murrayfield Stadium to the Royal Yacht Britannia.

TOP TIP

Stockbridge's main drag (home to many of its best bars, restaurants and shops) runs along Raeburn Pl and Comely Bank Rd. From here, it's easily walkable to Inverleith Park, the Botanic Garden and the Water of Leith. Even Princes St is only 15 minutes away by foot; there are regular buses too.



RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARRISON
LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARRISON

Inverleith Park



Stockbridge Market

A FEAST FOR FOODIES

Held every Sunday throughout the year, this is one of the most popular farmers markets in the city. The stalls here are run by Scottish producers, with a focus on organic and locally sourced fare, from quality fish, meat and cheeses to all kinds of vegan foodstuffs. There are also street-food stalls selling ready-to-eat paella, curries and plantain bites. This market is a great place to pick up a souvenir from your travels – take home everything from craft soap and handmade jewellery to a novelty dog collar.

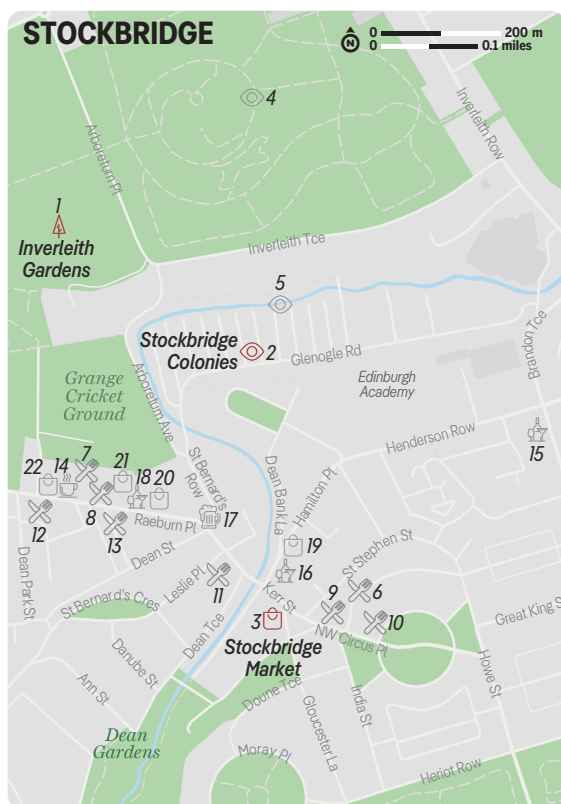


Inverleith Park

ROOM TO ROAM

It may be less known to visitors than Princes St Gardens and the Meadows, but Inverleith Park is one of the most popular green spaces in the city. Taking its name from the Gaelic Inbhir Lite, which means 'Mouth of Leith', the slightly sloped lawns here offer wonderful views across to the Old Town – making it a popular picnic spot when fireworks are being set off above the castle during the Royal Military Tattoo and Hogmanay. Come in early August for the park's annual Foodies Festival. Most visitors will combine a visit here with a trip to the neighbouring Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.



**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 Inverleith Park
- 2 Stockbridge Colonies
- 3 Stockbridge Market

SIGHTS

- 4 Royal Botanic Garden
- 5 Water of Leith

EATING

- 6 Bross Bagels
- 7 Café Gallo
- 8 Herbie of Edinburgh
- 9 Kilted Donut
- 10 Pantry
- 11 RadiCibus
- 12 Scran & Scallie
- 13 Street Box

DRINKING

- 14 Artisan Roast
- 15 Bacco Wine
- 16 Smith & Gertrude
- 17 Stockbridge Tap
- 18 Whiskers Wine Bar

SHOPPING

- 19 Bethany Shop
- 20 British Red Cross
- 21 Oxfam
- 22 Shelter



Stockbridge Colonies

A UNIQUE HOUSING ESTATE

Built along the Water of Leith at the northern edge of Stockbridge, the Colonies are something of an architectural oddity. Mass immigration during the height of the Industrial Revolution meant that Edinburgh was becoming dangerously overpopulated, so a co-operative building company was set up to provide low-cost housing for the city's vital craft workers. That's how this distinctive housing estate, comprising a series of pretty, stone terraced houses with gable windows, all laid out in a grid pattern, was born. Each building was divided into two different four-bedroom flats, with entrances on opposite sides so that each residence had its own front garden. Initially costing around £100 to buy, the flats are now some of the most sought-after properties in Edinburgh.



A STROLL AROUND STOCKBRIDGE



Simon Milne, the 16th Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (p82), shares his tips for a morning or afternoon in Stockbridge:

No visit to Edinburgh is complete without a trip to my neighbourhood of Stockbridge, with its village culture, cobbled streets and rich architecture. After a stroll around the fabulous Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, take a short walk down to the **Water of Leith**, via Arboretum Ave and St Bernard's Row. As you wander, enjoy the fascinating collection of trees and shrubs, generously donated by a local resident. Continue to the **Stockbridge Tap**, a fine traditional pub with an equally fine selection of ales and spirits. From here, stock up on local produce at the excellent deli **Herbie of Edinburgh**, then head to **Inverleith Park** for a picnic with a view.



MIKE WORMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Tiger Moon lilies, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

MORE IN STOCKBRIDGE

From Snowdrops to Sunflowers

CHANGING SEASONS IN THE BOTANIC GARDEN

Founded in 1670 as a physic garden to grow medicinal plants, the **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh** is now home to a living collection of more than 250,000 plants. No two times of the year are the same in the gardens, so here's our season-by-season guide for what to see.

SPRING: Head to the Alpine House in early spring to see the first flowers of the year: snowdrops and Chinese witch hazels. As the season advances, pink magnolia flowers bloom alongside pastel-shaded winter roses and wake robins. Feeling chilly? Grab a tea in the Terrace Café.



WHERE TO EAT IN STOCKBRIDGE

Pantry

Choose from delicious breakfast and brunch options, from eggs Benedict to Belgian waffles. **£**

Scran & Scallie

Enjoy pub classics with a fresh, modern and seasonal twist at this exceptional gastropub. **££**

RadiCibus

Tasting menus of high-end Italian food and wine in a 19th-century Georgian setting. **££**



SUMMER: The garden is a riot of colour in summer, from Himalayan blue poppies in the Woodland Garden to yellow-pink Golden Jubilee roses in the Queen Mother's Memorial Garden. Lay a blanket on the lawn in front of Inverleith House for a picnic with a city view.

AUTUMN: Carpets of bright pink Guernsey lilies, purple crocuses and crimson flag lilies abound in autumn. Kids will love playing in the fallen leaves, while sniffing the burnt caramel in the air (the natural aroma of the Japanese katsura tree).

WINTER: The garden is far from bare in winter, as the burnt-orange branches of scarlet willow trees brighten up the place. There are also the temperate and tropical greenhouses, ideal for warming up on a winter's day. Towards the end of the winter, pale-yellow catkins begin to appear.

A Charity Shop Crawl

FROM VINYL TO VINTAGE FURNITURE

Looking for antique furniture with some added altruism or designer sunglasses with a side of do-gooding? Then spend an afternoon exploring Stockbridge's remarkable charity shops. Forget about well-worn clothes and tatty trinkets: these stores sell beautiful, good-as-new items for a fraction of their original price. Even better, all of your purchases go towards helping those in need. Win-win.

Start your charity shop crawl in the **Bethany Shop** on Hamilton Pl. Run by a Christian charity that aims to end homelessness in Scotland, this store is piled high with vintage furniture and household trinkets. From here, take a stroll down to Raeburn Pl, Stockbridge's high street and the epicentre of any charity shop crawl. The **British Red Cross** shop is big on bridal fashion, with beautiful wedding dresses and accessories at barely believable prices; all sales help fund humanitarian work with those in crisis. A few doors down, anti-poverty charity **Oxfam** has a shop selling rare and collectable vinyl (plus CDs and DVDs) at a cut-price rate. Finally, head to **Shelter**, a sprawling charity shop that stocks clothes, books, collectibles and more – with proceeds going towards supporting their work with the homeless. Exhausted after all that shopping? Treat yourself to a coffee in **Artisan Roast** next door.



PREFER NEW THREADS?

Shop for new and original designer fashion on **George Street** (p72) in the New Town, along **William Street** in the West End, and around **Morningside** (p92) in South Edinburgh.



BEST QUICK EATS IN STOCKBRIDGE

Street Box

Fresh, flavourful and authentic, this Thai street-food takeaway place is a local favourite. £

Bross Bagels

Tasty vegetarian and meat-filled bagels, from a three-cheese classic to a surf and turf. £

Café Gallo

This small, family-run Italian bistro serves a great selection of soups, salads and sandwiches. £

Kilted Donut

Delicious filled, ring and vegan doughnuts in a huge range of flavours – plus good coffee. £



BEST WINE BARS IN STOCKBRIDGE

Smith & Gertrude

Enjoy Old and New World wines with well-matched cheese and charcuterie in this popular bar.

Whiskers Wine Bar

Part wine bar, part bistro (with superb British-French cuisine), part live music venue. All great.

Bacco Wine

A short walk from Stockbridge's centre, this excellent little bar-shop specialises in fine Italian wines.



LEITH

WATERFRONT PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Leith first entered recorded history when it was gifted to Holyrood Abbey by King David I in 1128. As close to the beach at Portobello as to Edinburgh's Old Town, Leith was independent at first, but its docks were soon claimed by its larger neighbour. The power struggle continued over the centuries, as Leith became a major port, until in 1833 it was officially recognised as an independent burgh. Less than a century later Leith was fully incorporated into Edinburgh. And that's where it remains: a city district, but one with its own distinct identity and independent spirit.

Today, Leith's long history can be seen in its 17th-century signal tower, its 19th-century swing bridge and, most famously, its 20th-century Royal Yacht Britannia. But it has also moved with the times, as the old whisky bonding warehouses have been turned into modern flats, and the disused dockyards have been lined with high-end restaurants and cocktail bars. The Leith of today is a modern and vibrant place, confident in its unique personality.

TOP TIP

Leith Walk leads from the New Town out to the waterfront, with regular bus and tram service along it. However, most of Leith's biggest draws are centred around the harbour area known as the Shore. A pleasant way to reach here is via the Water of Leith, a riverside walk passing through Stockbridge.



JAIN MASTERTON/LAMY STOCK PHOTO ©



Leith Links

THE REAL HOME OF GOLF

While St Andrews is widely considered to be the home of golf, the sport's earliest foundations were laid in Leith back in 1744. That's when the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, who would meet to play short rounds at Leith Links, drew up the first official rules of the game. Today, Leith Links is a public park with only subtle reminders of its history; look out for a plaque describing how the game was originally played over five holes of around 400yd each.

Leith Links



Port of Leith

EDINBURGH'S NEWEST WHISKY DISTILLERY

This eye-catching 'vertical distillery' is set in a tower block overlooking the Royal Yacht Britannia. Having spent a few years focusing on producing innovative and experimental spirits, it's scheduled to open to the public in spring 2023 with guided tours of the distillery, as well as tasting rooms and private dining. The highlight here is the double-height, 9th-floor rooftop bar, with unmatched views across the Firth of Forth and back to Edinburgh Castle. Nearby Lind & Lime Distillery is owned by the same team and specialises in gin. There are tours and tastings every Thursday to Sunday; the shop is open daily.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- 1 Leith Link s
- 2 Port of Leith
- 3 Royal Yacht Britannia

SIGHTS

- 4 Coalie Park
- 5 Custom House
- 6 St Mark's Park

SLEEPING

- 7 Fingal
- 8 Sandaig Guest House

EATING

- 9 Aurora
- 10 Crolla's
- 11 Fishers
- 12 Heron
- 13 King's Wark

- 14 Little Chartroom
- 15 Mimi's Bakehouse
- 16 Restaurant Martin Wishart
- 17 Roseleaf
- 18 Ship on the Shore

DRINKING

- 19 Arthur Williams Mural
- 20 Coburg House Art

- Studios
- 21 Malt & Hops
- 22 Nobles Bar
- 23 Teuchters Landing
- 24 Toast Drinking
- 25 Woodland Creatures

SHOPPING

- 26 Pitt



Royal Yacht Britannia

THE QUEEN'S FAVOURITE YACHT

Launched in Scotland in 1953 and officially retired in 1997, this impressive royal yacht was said to be a favourite of Queen Elizabeth II, who allegedly shed a tear at its decommissioning ceremony. Today, the yacht is Leith's biggest draw – and consistently voted as one of Edinburgh's top attractions. Access is via the **Ocean Terminal** shopping centre, which has a display of exhibits and photographs covering the yacht's history, before a walkway leads visitors out to the ship itself. Once on board, a self-guided audio tour allows you to explore all five levels of the Britannia, from the Burmese teak decks down through the beautifully appointed 1950s royal apartments to the lower-deck engine room.



HIGH-END DINING IN LEITH

For a multicourse meal without the nonstop relocating, book a table in one of Leith's renowned fine-dining restaurants. The two most established names here are the **Kitchen**, with its strong nose-to-tail philosophy and focus on seasonal, locally sourced produce; and **Restaurant Martin Wishart**, with its inspired French-influenced dishes and pretty waterfront location. Other great options in the area include the **Little Chartroom**, which is appealing for its small but perfectly formed menu and open kitchen; **Heron**, which is known for its farm-to-table fine dining with organic produce; and **Aurora**, which specialises in Modern European cuisine with subtle Middle Eastern and Asian twists.



RICHE CHAN/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Water of Leith

MORE IN LEITH

The Shore to Stockbridge

A WATER OF LEITH WALK

Rising in the Pentland Hills and snaking through the heart of the city towards the Firth of Forth, the **Water of Leith** is the lifeblood of Edinburgh. See one of the river's most interesting stretches on a one-hour walk from the Shore to Stockbridge. Start at Leith's **Custom House**, a beautiful Georgian building that's now home to a host of independent art and design studios. Follow the river south, past modern apartment blocks and trade shops, to the landscaped lawns of **Coalie Park**, once a key part of the area's shipbuilding past. As you walk, look out for kingfishers and cormorants wading in the river. Pass under the old stone railway bridge to reach the spacious **St Marks Park** in Powderhall, named for the gunpowder factory that once existed here. The path weaves on



WHERE TO STAY IN LEITH

Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel

This Leith Walk hostel has dorms and private rooms with plasma TVs and keycard entry. £

Sandaig Guest House

On Leith Links, this Victorian townhouse B&B has boldly coloured decor and to-die-for breakfasts. ££

Fingal

Enjoy a luxurious stay on this former lighthouse maintenance ship, now a boutique hotel. £££



through Canonmills – look across the water to see the attractively uniform **Stockbridge Colonies** housing development – before rising up to join the road at Arboretum Ave. You can either head north to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh or rejoin the riverside southwards as it winds into trendy Stockbridge.

Build Your Own Tasting Menu

EXPLORE THE SHORE, COURSE BY COURSE

When it comes to eating well in Edinburgh, Leith is the place to be. As well as multiple Michelin-star restaurants, it's home to excellent (but affordable) seafood places, gastropubs and foodie cafes. In fact, Leith has so many great dining options, it can be tricky to choose just one. So don't. Instead, take a stroll along the Shore and build your own tasting menu from the food you find along the way.

APPETISER: How about starting your DIY meal with oysters? **Ship on the Shore** serves them any way you like, from fresh to tempura, and always with a glass of champagne.

STARTER: Gorgeous gastropub **King's Wark** has delicious but unfussy starter options. Choose from the salt and pepper squid, the seafood chowder or the baked camembert.

MAIN COURSE: Fresh seafood is the order of the day for a Leith main, so walk up the waterfront to **Fishers**. Go big with a whole Anstruther lobster served with garlic butter, hand-cut chips and salad.

DESSERT: For dessert, it has to be the dessert cafe: **Crolla's** serves ice cream, waffles and churros.

DIGESTIF: Set in an old art gallery, wine cafe **Toast** is the perfect stop for an end-of-meal glass of wine, a cocktail or a coffee.

Sand, Sea & (Sometimes) Sun

EXPLORING PORTOBELLO BEACH

Although it was once more famous for smuggling than sunbathing, **Portobello** has been a popular beach resort since the arrival of the railway in the 1800s. The broad, sandy shoreline flows westwards along the Firth of Forth towards Leith, making for a great seaside escape during a stay in North Edinburgh.

Start at Leith Links and walk east for around 15 minutes – first along the busy A199 road, then along a quieter path beside the train track – until you come to the sandy shore. It's the start of a 2-mile stretch of uninterrupted golden beach with

WHY I LOVE LEITH



Joseph Reaney,
writer

My favourite part of town? Leith. It has the best of both worlds: a distinct identity (with its own rich history, architecture and character) but also quick and easy access to the city centre (just 20 minutes by bus or tram, or an hour's pleasant stroll along the Water of Leith). It's also home to some of Scotland's very best restaurants, cafes and pubs.

Leith is a particularly appealing base during the summer festival season, as it allows you to dip in and out of the Old Town for world-class theatre, comedy, music and dance, while returning every evening to (relative) peace and quiet.



WHERE TO HAVE BRUNCH IN LEITH

Mimi's Bakehouse

Follow your nose to the delicious Scottish breakfasts and French toast at this amazing bakery-cafe. **£**

Pitt

Open from midday at weekends, this street-food market has everything from pancakes to *pierogi*. **£**

Roseleaf

This quaint, floral-wallpapered cafe-bar serves unbeatable eggs Benedict with Stornoway black pudding. **££**



ARTY LEITH



Based in Leith's Custom House, skyscape artist **Trina Bohan** (trinabohan.co.uk) shares her favourite arty places in the neighbourhood.

Coburg House Art Studios

This old Leith granary is home to a thriving creative community. More than 70 artists, photographers, jewellers, painters, ceramicists and kiltmakers are here, with changing exhibitions in the upper gallery space.

Nobles Bar

Every nook in this elegant Victorian bar has something to see, including some of Leith's best stained-glass windows and several old nautical oil paintings.

Arthur Williams Mural

Arthur Williams spent his life on the streets of Edinburgh and became well known by locals. This mural by artist Shona Hardie is a lovely tribute, capturing the dignity of this gentle man in minimal white on a painted black wall.



FELIX MIZONIKOV/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Portobello

wide open views across the water to Fife. As you stroll, look out for some fine examples of seafront architecture, including the red sandstone **Portobello Swim Centre**, and make sure you stop for a soft-serve 99 Flake ice cream; it's claimed that the British favourite was invented here. The promenade continues all the way to **Joppa**, at which point you can loop back into Portobello town, well worth a visit for its elegant Georgian crescents and neoclassical **Town Hall** building. From here, it's just a 45-minute walk (or 20-minute bus ride) back to Leith Links.



WHERE TO DRINK IN LEITH

Teuchters Landing

This warren of a pub with floating waterfront terrace has a huge choice of whiskies.

Woodland Creatures

A Leith Walk favourite with quirky leafy decor and great veggie- and vegan-friendly food.

Malt & Hops

Open since 1749, this popular waterside pub has great cask ales – and a resident ghost.

SOUTH EDINBURGH

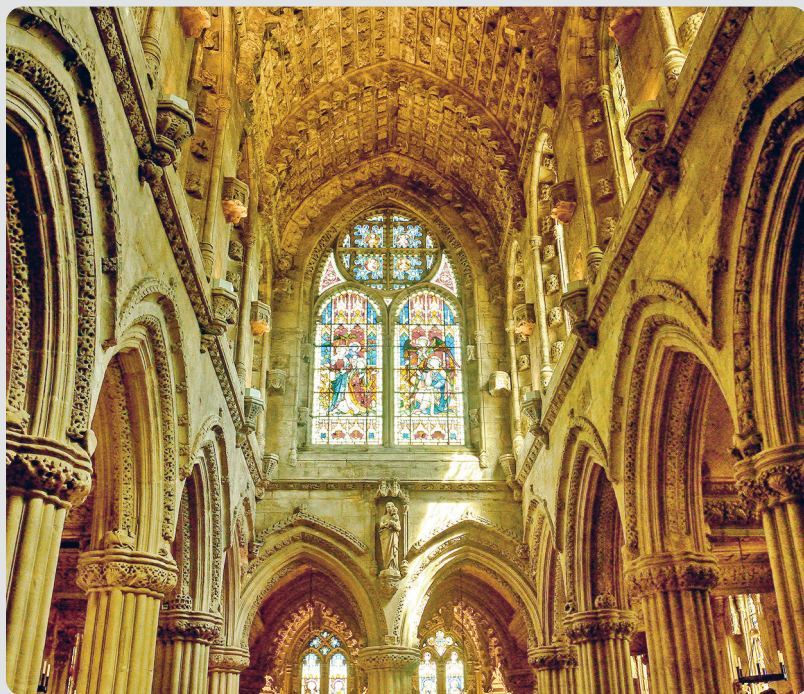
GREEN PARKS AND HILLS

Spreading down from the Old Town and west of Holyrood Park, Edinburgh's Southside neighbourhood is comprised of several suburbs, including Newington, Mayfield, Bruntsfield and Morningside. Together, they form one of Edinburgh's most eclectic quarters, home to anatomical museums and avant-garde arts centres, time-honoured pubs and state-of-the-art gin distilleries, old Victorian theatres and modern music venues. Most of all, the Southside is home to some of the city's best B&Bs, offering a quiet stay away from the crowds.

It's also the gateway to South Edinburgh. Follow the A701 south and things quickly become more rural, culminating in the rolling green hills and hiking trails of the Pentlands. Along the way, stop to see medieval Craigmillar Castle, take a tour of the National Mining Museum of Scotland and explore the remarkable Rosslyn Chapel. Golfers will also love the many excellent 18-hole golf courses, from the parkland of Prestonfield to the gorse-covered contours of Braid Hills.

TOP TIP

The Southside radiates out from the Meadows, with most of its attractions centred around the A1 (Nicholson St and South Clerk St) to the east and the A702 (Home St, Bruntsfield Pl and Morningside Rd) to the west. There are regular buses running along both routes, though anywhere down to Mayfair and Morningside is walkable to the centre.



ATTILA JANDI/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Rosslyn Chapel (p95)



SOUTH EDINBURGH

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Summerhall
- 2 The Meadows

SIGHTS

- 3 Bruntsfield
- 4 Union Canal

SLEEPING

- 5 94DR
- 6 Glenalmond House

- 7 Southside Guest House

EATING

- 8 Bonnie Burrito
- 9 Conditia
- 10 Kalpa
- 11 Kora by Tom Kitchen

ENTERTAINMENT

- 21 Church Hill Theatre
- 22 King's Theatre
- 23 Queen's Hall

- 12 Mosque Kitchen
- 13 Nile Valley Cafe
- 14 Sister Bao
- DRINKING**
- 15 32 Below
- 16 Cloisters
- 17 Degda Ba
- 18 Leslie's Bar
- 19 Royal Dick Bar
- 20 Southern



Dish at Rhubarb



Prestonfield House

STAY IN A STATELY HOME

For a country escape in the heart of Edinburgh, book a stay at Prestonfield House. Built in 1687 as a private estate, it's now the city's most luxurious hotel stay; a baroque sanctuary of sculpted antique busts, gold-framed portraits and burgundy-shaded velvet curtains. Take a stroll around the secluded gardens and parkland, which backs onto Holyrood Park, before experiencing the fine-dining restaurant **Rhubarb**. The only place to match Prestonfield House for decadence is sister hotel and restaurant the Witchery, situated right below the castle.



Concert, Summerhall



Summerhall

EDINBURGH'S PREMIER
ARTS CENTRE

Once the veterinary school of Edinburgh University, Summerhall is now one of the country's best cultural and arts centres. The building's old lecture theatres and halls now hum with live theatre, music, avant-garde art and academic lectures all year-round – with even more events during the Edinburgh International Festival. Summerhall is also the venue for one of Edinburgh's most popular *ceilidhs*, a traditional Scottish music and dance night. It's ideal for beginners, as a caller teaches the dance steps before each song begins. Pickering's Gin distillery is also based here; there are tours and tastings available every Thursday to Sunday.



Prestonfield House



The Meadows

EDINBURGH'S LUNGS

It may be less visible than Holyrood Park, but ask a local for their favourite green space and there's a good chance they'll mention the Meadows. On a sunny day, this large park is packed with families, students and office workers, here to picnic, play football, throw Frisbees and fly kites. Even in less clement weather, it's a popular place for a stroll. The Meadows isn't just an expanse of lawn either: the park is home to several sports facilities, including tennis courts and a mini-golf course, as well as a children's play park. Walking from the Old Town? Take a short detour onto George St Lane to visit the eye-catching Chapel of St Albert the Great.

LEFT: SERGEI ANANISOV/SHUTTERSTOCK © TOP: ROBERTO NICOLINI/GETTY IMAGES © BOTTOM: JONATHAN ALAN SPENCER/GETTY IMAGES ©

THE UNION CANAL

Opened in 1822 to transport goods to and from the capital, the Edinburgh and Glasgow Union Canal is better known today as a popular walking and cycling route. The towpath begins at **Lochrin Basin**, just a 10-minute walk northwest of the Meadows, and runs all the way to the **Falkirk Wheel**, an eye-catching rotating boat lift located almost 30 miles west of Edinburgh. There's plenty to see along the way too, including the ruins of 16th-century **Niddry Castle** and the history-filled **Linlithgow Palace**, the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots. Not a fan of walking? You can also traverse the canal on the water: rent a kayak or canoe for a few hours, or book a narrowboat for multiday adventure.



NATALIE DE WINTER/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Union Canal

MORE IN SOUTH EDINBURGH

Hipster Haven

STROLLING BRUNTSFIELD AND MORNINGSIDE

Stretching southwest of the Old Town towards the grassy Pentland Hills, the neighbouring districts of Bruntsfield and Morningside have some of Edinburgh's coolest cafes and pubs, oldest theatres and cinemas, and trendiest boutiques and charity shops. Explore them all on a leisurely 90-minute stroll.

Start beneath the skyscraping tower of the **Barclay Viewforth Church** at the far northwest corner of the Meadows. Keep the park on your left-hand side as you walk down **Bruntsfield Place** to explore its array of independent shops, from fashion outlets and designer jewellers to artisan chocolatiers and craft bakeries. As the road bends to the left, you merge into Morningside: divert left to see the **Dominion Cinema**, a 1930s art deco gem that proudly remains family-run to this day. If you have the time, catch a film to see its plush interior



WHERE TO STAY IN SOUTH EDINBURGH

Glenalmond House

The area's best-value option, with comfy rooms, hearty breakfasts and friendly owners. **££**

Southside Guest House

A modern hotel in a Victorian terrace: expect bold colours and Buck's Fizz breakfasts. **££**

94DR

An elegant guesthouse with individually designed rooms and delicious breakfasts served in the conservatory. **£££**



KAROL KOZLOWSKI PREMIUM RM COLLECTION/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO ©

Canny Man's

of deep-pile carpets and soft leather chairs. Return to Bruntsfield Pl, then dart off the other way to witness one of Edinburgh's oddest sights: the **Wild West Town**. Tucked down an alley off Springfield Gardens, this row of dilapidated wooden houses – a strange slice of the American Frontier in the middle of Morningside – was built in the 1990s by a local furniture company. Back on the main drag, continue south until you reach **Canny Man's**, one of the best whisky bars in Edinburgh.

Five Pubs in 30 Minutes

A SOUTHSIDE BAR CRAWL

With its heady mix of handsome Victorian pubs, student-friendly bars and craft beer and gin places, the Southside can lay claim to the highest concentration of great drinking holes anywhere in the city. Take in five of the best on this compact pub crawl – with just a short walk between each drink stop.



PUBS, PUBS, PUBS

When it comes to pub crawls, the only match for the Southside is **Leith** (p84), with bars along Leith Walk and on the Shore. For a LGBTIQ+ bar crawl, head to the **Pink Triangle** (p74) in the New Town.



WHERE TO EAT IN SOUTH EDINBURGH

Kalpna

High-quality, low-cost vegetarian Indian food: try the *baingan achari* (spicy marinated aubergines). **££**

Kora by Tom Kitchen

An upmarket but unpretentious restaurant serving seasonally inspired Scottish meat and fish dishes. **£££**

Condita

This exclusive Michelin-starred restaurant has six of the most sought-after tables in town. **£££**



BEST LIVE VENUES IN SOUTH EDINBURGH

King's Theatre

This Edwardian-era Bruntsfield theatre has touring shows, but is better known for its festive panto.

Queen's Hall

This midsize music venue regularly hosts renowned global rock, pop and jazz music artists.

Church Hill Theatre

A big Fringe venue, this pink sandstone church-turned-theatre also has year-round amateur dramatic shows.



HIKING AROUND EDINBURGH

The Pentland Hills are far from the only place to go hiking in Edinburgh's city limits. Scale the heights of **Arthur's Seat** (p65) in Holyrood Park or climb up Corstorphine Hill behind **Edinburgh Zoo** (p79).



JOANNA TACZUK/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Pentland Hills



WHERE TO PLAY GOLF IN SOUTH EDINBURGH

Prestonfield Golf Club

Walkable from the centre, this challenging parkland course offers stunning views of Arthur's Seat.

Braid Hills Golf Course

Play 18 holes of tricky gorse-covered contours – or just the nine holes of Wee Braids.

Swanston Golf Club

Founded in 1927 and still going strong, Swanston is nestled beneath the Pentland Hills.



Start your evening's adventure at **32 Below**, a rowdy underground bar with beer pong and pleasingly greasy food – ideal for lining your stomach for the night ahead. From here, walk five minutes south to the drop-dead gorgeous **Dagda Bar**, where you will find both students and pensioners sipping beer beneath the beautifully embossed ceiling. Another short walk south brings you to Summerhall arts complex and its minimalist **Royal Dick Bar**, a perfect place to sample the distilled-on-site Pickering's Gin. Beer lovers may prefer the next stop, the **Southern**, for its dozen taps of craft beers plucked from across Scotland and beyond. Finally, walk the 10 minutes from here to **Leslie's Bar**, a Victorian-era pub with an ornate interior – including its original mahogany island bar.

Not ready for the night to end? Finish your evening with a bonus drink: walk northwest through the Meadows to reach the one-of-a-kind **Cloisters Bar**, a great real ale and whisky pub set in an old church parsonage.

The Beautiful South

CASTLES, CHAPELS AND CRAGGY HILLS

The south of Edinburgh doesn't end with Southside. Some of the region's most appealing sights lie just a little further out from the centre, so rent a car for the day to explore some of them. Or, if you prefer, follow the same route with a Lothian Buses day pass (though regular changes are required).

Your first stop in South Edinburgh is **Craigmillar Castle**, an impressive medieval ruin famous for its morbid associations with Mary, Queen of Scots – this is where her courtiers plotted to assassinate her husband, Henry Stuart. Climb the 15th-century tower for splendid views back across the city. A 20-minute drive southeast brings you to the **National Mining Museum Scotland**, in what was once Scotland's largest mining village. Guided tours from ex-miners provide a fascinating insight into the country's coal industry, with a chance to see some of the giant mining machinery up close. Drive west for 15 minutes to reach **Rosslyn Chapel**, a magnificent 15th-century church that was heavily featured in Dan Brown's best-selling 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code*, before another short drive west takes you to the edge of the undulating **Pentland Hills**. Park up near the Steading pub to join a hiking trail leading up into the hills. Finally, head back to Edinburgh city centre via the excellent **Royal Observatory Edinburgh**, which holds regular astronomy talks and night sky tours.

THE BEST LUNCH SPOTS IN SOUTHSIDE



Steph Leach, the Events and Fringe Operations Manager at Summerhall (p91), shares her favourite lunch spots in Southside.

Nile Valley Cafe

This is the Summerhall team's go-to lunch spot, especially during the festival. I always go for the Africa Wrap – a delicious falafel, feta and spicy yoghurt sauce situation.

Mosque Kitchen

This Edinburgh institution serves tasty curries. There are bucketloads of vegetarian and vegan options too; my favourite is the aubergine curry with onions and peppers.

Sister Bao

This affordable place has lovely people and quick service. Their Oil Spill Noodles (with chilli oil and pak choi) are insane. They also have a Smacked Cucumber side (in sesame oil, soy sauce and black vinegar), which is a revelation.

