

A woman in a vibrant, multi-colored patterned dress and a red flower in her hair stands atop a tall metal ladder in a city street. She has her arms outstretched and a joyful expression. Purple confetti is falling all around her. A diverse crowd of people, including children and adults, is gathered at the base of the ladder, watching the performance. The background shows multi-story buildings and a cloudy sky. The text 'Edinburgh Festivals SURVIVAL GUIDE' is overlaid on the top half of the image.

Edinburgh Festivals
SURVIVAL GUIDE

Introduction by Alexander McCall Smith

INTRODUCTION

The original Edinburgh Festival was a wonderful gesture. In 1947, Britain was a dreary and difficult place to live, with the hardships and shortages of the Second World War still very much in evidence. The idea was to promote joyful celebration of the arts that would bring colour and excitement back into daily life.

It worked, and the Edinburgh International Festival rapidly became one of the leading arts festivals of the world. Edinburgh in the late summer came to be synonymous with artistic celebration and sheer joy, not just for the people of Edinburgh and Scotland, but for everybody.

But then something rather interesting happened. The city had shown itself to be the ideal place for a festival, and it was not long before the excitement and enthusiasm of the International Festival began to spill over into other artistic celebrations. There was the Fringe, the unofficial but highly popular younger sibling of the official Festival, but that was just the beginning. Along came the Edinburgh International Book Festival, now in the view of many the very best book festival in the world, the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, the Edinburgh International Science Festival, and the International Film Festival. All of these were rapidly established as leaders in their particular field, attracting the attention not only of devoted enthusiasts but also introducing visitors to Scotland to new themes and experiences. Soon there was something for just about everyone, spread out over the entire annual calendar, so that a

visitor might find a suitable festival even at the less obvious times of the year. The Scottish International Storytelling Festival, for example, takes place in the shortening days of late October and early November, and, at what might be the coldest, darkest time of the year, there is the remarkable Edinburgh's Hogmany, one of the world's biggest parties. The Hogmany celebration and the events that go with it allow many thousands of people to see the light at the end of winter's tunnel.

How has this happened? At the heart of this is the fact that Edinburgh is, quite simply, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. What better place can there be to hold an artistic event than a city that is itself an artistic creation of breath-taking loveliness? Then there is the welcome. Scotland is hospitable, and visitors to Edinburgh and to Scotland at large notice that. Music, drama, poetry, science: these are universal things that Scotland embraces whole-heartedly and is delighted to share with visitors. Edinburgh's many festivals beckon. We would be delighted if you were to join us.

Alexander McCall Smith



“At the heart of this is the fact that Edinburgh is, quite simply, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.”

Welcome to VisitScotland's first *Edinburgh Festivals Survival Guide*, packed with everything you need to know about getting the most from the festivals this July and August. With help from our friends at Edinburgh Festivals, we've pulled together a selection of the hot highlights from this summer's events plus the insider hints and tips you need to give you a great experience in the world's festival city. Be sure to check out www.visitscotland.com for more ideas on what to see and do in Edinburgh this summer and www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk for news, reviews and ticket information.

CONTENTS

WHAT TO EXPECT	5	Where to eat and drink	34
What's it like in Edinburgh in August?	6	Top ten most visited attractions in Edinburgh	36
10 things you might not know about Edinburgh	8	Hidden gems	38
The July/August festivals	10	Off the beaten track	39
The Edinburgh festivals in numbers	13	Exploring further afield	40
History of the festivals	14		
THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS	15	FESTIVAL FAMILIES	43
Highlights	16	The Edinburgh festivals for kids	44
Great for.....	19	LGBT EDINBURGH	47
Unusual venues	20	Recommended bars and cafés	48
		Spotlighted LGBT events	50
WHEN YOU'RE HERE	21	PLANNING YOUR TRIP	51
Finding out what to see	22	Travelling to Edinburgh	52
Doing the festivals on a budget	23	Getting tickets and programmes	54
Hints and tips	25	What to bring with you	55
Area profiles	26	Booking accomodation	56
Exploring Edinburgh	30	USEFUL CONTACTS	57
Festivals and similar year-round Edinburgh attractions	33		

This guide highlights just a selection of events taking place during the Edinburgh Festivals in 2014. The information contained in this publication is to the best of VisitScotland's knowledge and was correct at the time of going to press. Events can be subject to change so we recommend you check details with the relevant festival website before travelling.

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A man with a beard and a plaid shirt is playing a black and gold Hohner accordion. He is looking slightly to the right with a focused expression. The background shows a crowd of people and a stone building with arches, suggesting an outdoor event in Edinburgh. The text is overlaid on the image with a semi-transparent orange background.

WHAT TO EXPECT

“Edinburgh isn’t so much a city, more a way of life... I doubt I’ll ever tire of exploring Edinburgh, on foot or in print.”

Ian Rankin



WHAT'S IT LIKE IN EDINBURGH IN AUGUST?

During Edinburgh's Festivals, the city transforms into a vibrant whirlwind of street performers, musicians, artists, writers and comedians, where one simple trip down the Royal Mile can quickly turn into watching an impromptu play, taking part in a jamming session, or enjoying a sophisticated night at the opera.

The city attracts a wonderful array of international visitors, famous faces and talented newcomers, and of course the switched on locals too! In August, Edinburgh becomes the place to be, and is often best experienced by simply soaking up the electric festival atmosphere.



Here are just some of the things you can expect during Edinburgh's festivals:

- A handbag full of flyers from **different shows**
- The sounds of **foot stomping** and an explosion of bright colours as the Edinburgh Mela hits town, celebrating cultures from all over the world
- **Unexpected performances**, that you didn't plan to go to
- **Dancing in the streets!** Dance acts often take to the streets to entice you to see their show
- Mesmerizing works of art and **exciting exhibitions** in galleries, art spaces and various museums all over the city
- Discovering your new favourite comedian and lots of **brand new talent**
- Being **spoilt for choice** with all of these different festivals happening - what to see first?
- Strong **flashes of tartan**, the **sound of the bagpipes** and **spectacular fireworks** every evening, as the Military Tattoo draws in the crowds
- **Bustling nightlife**, with bars and pubs open till dawn
- Being transported into other worlds and getting into the minds of influential writers with talks and readings at the **Book Festival**
- Watching performances in **unusual venues**. In the past, performers at the Fringe have performed in places including a swimming pool, a barge and even in the comfort of someone's flat
- Getting your glad rags on for an evening at the theatre during the International Festival, and finishing your evening **dancing in a lively bar**
- **Rubbing shoulders with celebrities** as you wander around the city. Scottish stand-up comedian Billy Connolly is known to be a regular attendee
- **Pulsating bass lines** everywhere you go, as the Jazz & Blues Festival entertains with worldwide talent, including Van Morrison and Jools Holland.

10 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT EDINBURGH

- 1 Edinburgh was the first city in the world to have its own fire brigade.
- 2 The capital city has more *listed buildings*, than anywhere else in the world.
- 3 Legend has it that University of Edinburgh students should not pass through the gates of *Edinburgh Castle*, or they will fail their degree. This has scared young undergraduates for centuries!
- 4 *The Royal Mile* was given its name because it is one mile long and stretches between two iconic attractions, Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood Palace.
- 5 There is a series of underground vaults in South Bridge, which were used for local businesses and even to store criminal proceeds, including the bodies of people killed by Burke and Hare for medical experiments.
- 6 Greyfriars Bobby (the popular dog statue on George IV Bridge) was a very loyal pet. The Skye Terrier guarded his owner's grave in Greyfriars Kirkyard for 14 years back in the 1800s.
- 7 *Arthur's Seat* is one part of an extinct volcano. It is sometimes known as the Lion's Head as from certain angles it looks like a crouching lion.
- 8 The Heart of Midlothian outside *St Giles' Cathedral* is the site of a former prison where executions were carried out - it is now traditional to spit on it for good luck!
- 9 Edinburgh is nicknamed 'Auld Reekie' because when buildings were heated by coal fires, thick smoke would create a haze over the city, which could be seen for miles.
- 10 The Grassmarket was once a very important marketplace for traders and a central meeting place and gossip spot for locals. It was also where public hangings took place, and is now rumoured to be one of Edinburgh's most haunted places.





THE JULY/AUGUST FESTIVALS



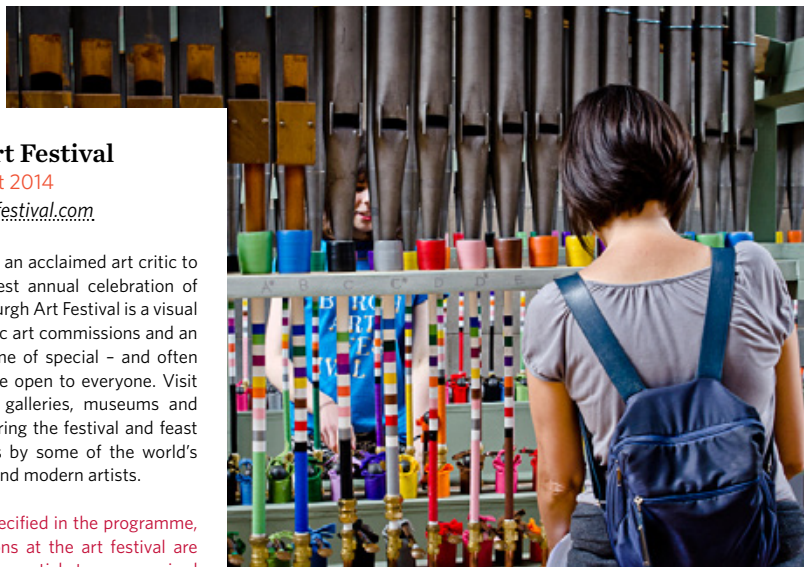
Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

18 - 27 July 2014

www.edinburghjazzfestival.com

Bop, boogie-woogie, samba and swing along to some of the world's greatest jazz and blues performers at Britain's biggest jazz and blues festival. The 2014 programme is the most ambitious to date and boasts 140 performances at 13 venues. Snap up tickets for nights filled with musical excellence and spontaneous creativity, indoors and outdoors, all over the city.

Tickets range in price from FREE to £87.50, with most events between £5 - £15. Keep your eye out for specials and on-the-day concessions.



Edinburgh Art Festival

31 July - 31 August 2014

www.edinburghartfestival.com

You don't have to be an acclaimed art critic to enjoy the UK's largest annual celebration of visual art. The Edinburgh Art Festival is a visual treat, with new public art commissions and an innovative programme of special - and often free - events that are open to everyone. Visit Edinburgh's leading galleries, museums and artist-run spaces during the festival and feast your eyes on pieces by some of the world's best contemporary and modern artists.

Unless otherwise specified in the programme, events and exhibitions at the art festival are FREE to attend. Where tickets are required they can be bought at the relevant venue.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

1 - 23 August 2014

www.edintattoo.co.uk

Experience a tremendous outdoor spectacle of sight and sound, set against the stunning backdrop of bewitching Edinburgh Castle, and take part in the Tattoo's annual 'global gathering'. Featuring military and civilian musicians and performers from every corner of the globe, this summer's performance will take you on a magical journey around the Commonwealth, celebrating the Year of Homecoming Scotland 2014 and *Our Home, Friends and Family*.

Tickets start from just £27. Book [online](#), over the phone at 0131 225 1188, or in person at the Tattoo Sales Office at 33-34 Market Street.



Edinburgh Festival Fringe

1 - 25 August 2014

www.edfringe.com

Immerse yourself in the fantastic atmosphere of the world-famous Festival Fringe. During August, thousands of performers, from students to superstars, converge on the city, bringing their talents to the city-wide extravaganza that is the world's largest arts festival. With exhibitions and events, as well as performances of theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, cabaret, children's shows, musicals, operas, music and spoken word, the choice is limitless.

Tickets range in price from FREE to around £30, though most tickets cost between £5 - £15 per person. Concessions are widely available.



Edinburgh International Festival

8 - 31 August 2014

www.eif.co.uk

For three exhilarating weeks each year, the Edinburgh International Festival brings the very best in world-wide theatre, classical music, opera, dance and visual art to Scotland's capital. Taking place 100 years after the outbreak of the First World War, the 2014 Festival offers a compelling exploration of the impact of conflict on culture and - in the year

in which Scotland is proud to host the Commonwealth Games - the bold 2014 programme will also feature work from many Commonwealth countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

Tickets range in price from FREE to around £45, with most shows between £12 - £35 per person.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

9 - 25 August 2014

www.edbookfest.co.uk

Experience the largest and most dynamic book festival in the world! The Edinburgh International Book Festival's 2014 programme features over 750 authors in 800 events for visitors of all ages, including the highly regarded children's programme. Head to the tented village in picturesque Charlotte Square Gardens, enjoy a coffee in the relaxed festival atmosphere and hear the thoughts, opinions and inspirations of some of your favourite authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson, Alexander McCall Smith and Diana Gabaldon.

Tickets range in price from FREE to £15, with most events around £10.





Edinburgh Mela

29 - 31 August 2014

www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk

For a family day out filled with international food, fashion and fun, look no further than the Edinburgh Mela - Scotland's biggest and best celebration of world music and dance. For just one weekend in August, the Mela fills Leith Links, a green space to the north east of Edinburgh city centre, with toe-tapping rhythms and amazing sights and smells. Look out for incredible international music and dance performances on the stages and mouth-watering treats in the global food village, such as flavourful curries, delicious hot and cold snacks and refreshing drinks. Children will love the interactive activities that are on in the fun-filled Kidzone and you'll be dazzled by the swirl of colourful clothes parading past in the famous Mela fashion show.

Tickets cost only £4 for adults for a fantastic full-day pass to the Mela, giving you unlimited access to all performances!

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVALS IN NUMBERS

The population of Edinburgh more than doubles during August. Said so often by Edinburgh residents it has taken on a mythic quality, this fun fact is actually true as the city swells in size to accommodate performers, thinkers, artists, and their very welcome audiences. Here are some fast facts to give you an idea of the scope of the festivals:

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

49,000 performances

3,100 shows

290 venues

Edinburgh Military Tattoo

1,000 cast members

220,000 spectators

100 million viewers worldwide

Edinburgh Art Festival

40 exhibitions

30 venues

250,000 visitors

Edinburgh International Festival

2,400 artists

43 nations

Edinburgh International Book Festival

750 authors

800 events

220,000 visitors

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

10 days

140 gigs

13 venues

Edinburgh Mela

3 days

30,000 visitors

HISTORY OF THE FESTIVALS

1947

Edinburgh International Festival

The International Festival emerged after the war as a means of providing "a platform for the flowering of the human spirit" and fostering creativity in Scotland. Its founders included opera impresario Sir Rudolf Bing, who selected the Scottish capital to host the festival due to its picturesque scenery, its wealth of theatres and venues, and the city's desire to make the festival a major attraction for locals and visitors alike.

Festival Fringe

A by-product of the International Festival, the Fringe also came to life in 1947. Taking advantage of the crowds gathered in the city, eight theatre companies turned up to the festival uninvited and performed more alternative pieces as a 'fringe' offering to the official programme. Still open to all types of performers, the Fringe showcases everything from theatre to comedy and has evolved into the biggest arts festival in the world - more than 1.9 million tickets were sold in 2013!

1978

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

The 70s saw the birth of Edinburgh's first Jazz and Blues Festival, which was set up in 1978 by banjo player and guitarist, Mike Hart. The festival initially focused on traditional jazz with a range of free events held in pubs, but by the mid-80s had grown to envelop swing, blues, mainstream jazz and more. Past visitors have included Buddy Tate, Warren Vache and the Hot Antic Jazz Band, with the exciting programme expanding to include more acts each year.

1995

Edinburgh Mela

The first Edinburgh Mela was held at Meadowbank Stadium in 1995, organised by members of some of the city's minority ethnic communities as a celebration of different cultures. Established by South Asian, Chinese, African and other groups, the Edinburgh Mela Company formed the following year and has since grown into Scotland's most exciting festival of cultural diversity, presenting and commissioning innovative work from around the globe.

1950

1950

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

Although the capital's first tattoo took place in Princes Street Gardens in 1949, the official Edinburgh Military Tattoo was founded a year later. It featured just eight items on its programme and drew some 6,000 spectators to simple seating around Castle Esplanade. Audiences have grown exponentially since then: around 220,000 from all over the world now see the Tattoo live at Edinburgh Castle each year, with tickets selling out in advance for the past decade.

1960

1970

1980

1983

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Edinburgh boasts a long and rich literary history and in 1983 hosted its very first Book Festival in Charlotte Square Gardens. Nowadays the festival is the biggest event of its kind in the world, regularly hosting talks, readings and workshops from the biggest names in contemporary literature - A L Kennedy, Margaret Atwood and Sebastian Faulks are just a few of the recent headliners to have graced its fantastic programme.

1990

2000

2004

Edinburgh Art Festival

Edinburgh Art Festival is the result of a 2001 campaign by newspaper Scotland on Sunday, which brought together a range of gallery directors keen to inject more visual art into Edinburgh's vibrant summer programme. The festival provides a collective platform in which numerous galleries can showcase their exhibitions and projects and has become Scotland's largest visual arts festival, featuring more than 30 venues all across the city.

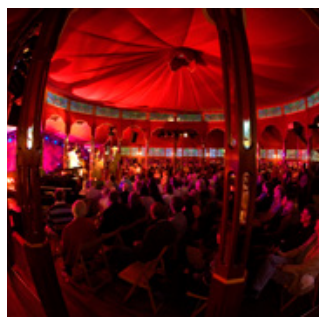
2010



THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

*“There is no habitation of human beings
in this world so fine in its way... as this,
the capital of Scotland.”*

Andrew Carnegie



Planning for summer festivals is a highly strategic game. Too little research and you might accidentally bypass something you've spent a lifetime dying to see. On the other hand, if you arrive with your schedule fully booked, you won't have space to squeeze in the newly discovered stars who are sure to be shooting off to fame and fortune in a year or two. With thousands of performances and events, it's worth locking in some not-to-miss shows and then letting the festival buzz take you where it will. To get you started, here are a few of the shows that look set to fill up fast.

EDINBURGH JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

Mandela Day Concert

18 July

This year's Jazz and Blues Festival opens on Mandela Day, and the opening night concert is dedicated to his memory. Featuring such musicians as Abdullah Ibrahim, who played at Nelson Mandela's inauguration, and Freshlyground, featured in the 2010 official World Cup song, it promises to be a night of high-energy festivity.

Edinburgh Festival Carnival

20 July

A free event that winds its way from the Mound to Princes Street Gardens, with more performances in the Grassmarket, the carnival will feature over 500 performers from across the world. Expect music, dance, incredible costumes, circus acrobatics, puppetry, and the urge to join in dancing - one you're certainly allowed to indulge.

We Love Oscar!

25 July

This tribute to jazz piano giant Oscar Peterson will see two former members of his Trio join Edinburgh's Brian Kellock, and later the Commonwealth jazz Big Band and Australian master trumpeter James Morrison, playing the music Peterson loved and created.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE

Juvenalia, Simon Callow

31 July - 25 August

Celebrity of extravagant theatre and film, Callow will once again grace an Edinburgh stage with a one-man show, this time based on the satirical writings of a Roman from the first century AD.

Horizontal Collaboration

31 July - 24 August

With new actors every day, reading the script for the first time as they perform, this promises to be a true Fringe experience: experimental, challenging and intense.

Hot Dub Time Machine

1 - 24 August

Festival favourite for the late-night crowd, this is a party like no other. The DJ will have you dancing all the way from 1954 to 2014.

EDINBURGH ART FESTIVAL

Where do I end and you begin

1 August - 19 October

Part of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, this is a major international exhibition of contemporary art selected by five international curators from Commonwealth countries, all exploring what the 'common-wealth' really means.

Kevin Harman - Open Studio

1 - 31 August

Join Kevin Harman in this open studio event, where the public will be able to enter the artist's space and engage directly with his practice, and in turn become involved themselves.

An Attempt At Exhausting A Place (in Edinburgh)

4 - 31 August

Alice Finbow will be sitting in the Manna House Bakery on Easter Road during a week in August, taking in the daily goings-on and putting her observations to a roll of paper, which will then be displayed in the café. Perhaps your own conversations or quirks will make an appearance in the final work.



ROYAL EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO

1 - 23 August

The Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a highlight all of its own: a mind-blowing performance of military precision and expertise in dance and music. The theme this year is *Our Home, Friends and Family*, and Scottish performers will be joined by hundreds of participants from Commonwealth countries in celebration on the Castle Esplanade, promising a wonderfully diverse display.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

Letters Home

Grid Iron Theatre Company

9 - 25 August

This theatre production takes place in and around Charlotte Square Gardens, weaving together stories written by four stars of contemporary fiction: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Kei Miller, Kamila Shamsie and Christos Tsiolkas.

How Can We Make Technology More Useful?

Joseph Stiglitz

25 August

Winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in economics, Stiglitz's recent book *The Price of Inequality* argues that technological innovations are failing to deliver on their promises, and often do more harm than good.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

The James Plays

10 - 22 August

A festival co-production with leading Scottish and UK theatre companies, this new theatrical trilogy by Rona Munro can be experienced all in one day or spread out throughout the festival, telling a vibrant story of Scottish culture and nationhood.

Inala

10 - 12 August

This is the world premiere of a new ballet from South Africa that blends Zulu song and dance traditions with Western classical ballet. The dancing will be set to a live performance by Grammy award-winning South African choir, Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Virgin Money Fireworks Concert

31 August

The grand finale of the International Festival is a longstanding favourite of locals and visitors alike, a live classical music performance in Princes Street Gardens accompanied by expertly choreographed fireworks shooting from the castle ramparts, a truly phenomenal sight.

EDINBURGH MELA

29 - 31 August 2014

The Edinburgh Mela is a two-day extravaganza of food, music, art and culture on Leith Links. A day-ticket gets you access to the entire site, including all the stages, which the Mela never fails to fill with an exciting programme of established and up-and-coming artists from near and far. In 2014 the Mela celebrates its 20th birthday with a commissioned piece, *The King of Ghosts*, on Friday 29 August, providing an extra-special evening opening to the festival.

GREAT FOR...

SPORTY TYPES

Clarke Carlisle: The Truth About Being a Footballer
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Charlotte Square, 22 August, 8.30pm

**Auld Reekie Roller Girls Present:
Good Things Come to Those Who Skate**
Fringe
Meadowbank Sports Centre, 2 & 9 August, 2pm

**The Art of Golf:
The story of Scotland's national sport**
Edinburgh Art Festival
Scottish National Gallery, 12 July - 26 October

MUSIC LOVERS

Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra
Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival
Festival Theatre, 20 July, 7.30pm

Kronos Quartet
Edinburgh International Festival
Usher Hall, 19 August, 8pm

Music for the Book of Deer
Fringe
Scottish Storytelling Centre, 17 - 19 August, 9pm

HISTORY BUFFS

Front
Edinburgh International Festival
Royal Lyceum Theatre, 22 - 26 August, 7pm

The War
Edinburgh International Festival
King's Theatre, 9 - 11 August, 8pm & 10 August, 3pm

Commonwealth of Words: Writing Against History
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Charlotte Square, 18 August, 2pm

COMEDY FANS

Josie Long: Cara Josephine
Fringe
The Stand Comedy Club, 30 July - 24 August, 8.40pm
(not 31 July, 11 or 16 August)

The Noise Next Door's Comedy Lock-In
Fringe
Pleasance Courtyard, 30 July - 24 August, 10.50pm

Mark Watson: More Than Just a Novel
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Charlotte Square, 13 August, 6.30pm

FASHIONISTAS

The Mela Fashion Show
Edinburgh Mela
Leith Links, date and times TBC

In Pursuit of Beauty
Fringe
Stand in the Square, 5 August, 3.40pm

FILM BUFFS

Fringe Film Festival
Fringe
C Venues - C nova, 28 July - 25 August, 10am - 10pm

Image a Nation: Screen Adaptations of Novels
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Charlotte Square, 17 August, 5pm

War on Film
Edinburgh International Festival
The Hub, 23 - 25 August, various times

FAMILIES

Dinosaur Zoo (Ages 3+)
Fringe
Pleasance Courtyard, 30 July - 25 August, 11am

Sing! Sing! Sing! Vivian French & M J McCarthy (Ages 5+)
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Charlotte Square, 23 August, 11.30am

The Adventure Machine (Ages 7+)
Fringe
C Venues - C, 30 July - 25 August, 1.15pm



UNUSUAL VENUES

During festival season it can feel like every shop, bar and available space becomes a venue. Here's our rundown of unlikely places where you can see shows during Edinburgh's Festivals:

1 Shh... music in a library?

With Love in a Library and Ghosts in a Gallery, Edinburgh International Festival presents free [pop-up performances](#) of beautiful music at venues in June, July and August, including locations such as the National Portrait Gallery and Morningside Library.

2 Comedy up Arthur's Seat

For one day only, Josie Long, Simon Munnery and Rich Fulcher perform comedy on a walk up Edinburgh's most famous hill in [This Arthur's Seat Belongs to Lionel Ritchie](#), with city views as a backdrop.

3 Edinburgh's seaside

Those who have a fear of open water be warned, [Out of Water](#) at Summerhall @ Portobello Beach features singers, swimmers and the chilling calls of those lost at sea.

4 Adam Pottery

The aptly named [Ferdinand - Bull in a China Shop!](#) is a staged reading of a hard hitting drama inspired by the classic children's book *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf. Could be a big smash!

5 A Victorian Glasshouse

Head north of the city centre to see the site-specific Captain Lightfoot Presents: [The Glasshouse at Lauriston Castle](#), a free exhibition of painting, sculpture and photography in the luscious castle grounds during Edinburgh Art Festival.

6 A mystery bedroom

You will be led to a secret venue, known only as Pleasance Pop Up: The Bedroom to see [Mental](#), a stark piece of performance art about a 'domestic extremist' who has been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder.

7 Sandy's Boxing Gym

The site-specific drama [No Guts, No Heart, No Glory](#) uses the energy of a real club to bring its story about female Muslim boxers to life.

8 A Corncrake in Charlotte Square

During Edinburgh International Book Festival you might hear Corncrake sounds in Charlotte Square - don't be fooled, it's part of a [sound installation](#) by Scottish Poetry Library which brings back the sounds of wildlife that once roamed here when the city was only fields.



WHEN YOU'RE HERE

*“I never perceived a better place than Edinburgh...
certainly it is the most beautiful town in the world.”*

Benjamin Disraeli



FINDING OUT WHAT TO SEE

Trying to choose just a few of the thousands of shows on offer is often the most difficult task you'll be faced with at the festivals. The following sources will help you to narrow down the possibilities, choose what to see and discover some hidden gems:

Newspapers and magazines

Many newspapers and magazines publish special review sections summing up hundreds of performances – a good place to get an overview of everything that's happening. Try *The Scotsman*, *The List*, *The Metro* or *The Skinny* for a flavour of what is going on over the festival period.

Social media

Keep an eye on social media to see what is trending locally and what people are discussing. Check out our [Useful Contacts](#) section for each festival's social media info.

Word of mouth

Often more reliable than stars and quotes on a poster – so listen out in pubs and cafés to see what others have been seeing (or just strike up a conversation with someone who looks like they are also in the festival spirit!)

Box offices and venues

Speak to box office and front of house staff at venues, especially the larger ones – many will be interested (or even involved) in the arts scene and will have their ear to the ground.

DOING THE FESTIVALS ON A BUDGET

Got a budget to stick to? With ticket deals and free entertainment, you can have a great experience and still have change for a pint or two. Watch out – some free events require booking and tickets will be snapped up fast!

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

Vibrantly bursting into Edinburgh venues on 18 July, the jazz festival has a great range of musical events waiting to tantalise your eardrums, and many are astoundingly cheap. There are [£5 sessions at the Jazz Bar](#) each night, and the [Festival Club at Tron Kirk](#) will be hosting gigs starting from as little as £2. The [Mardi Gras](#) street party in the Grassmarket on 19 July is completely free and will have you dancing throughout the day to everything from swing and Dixieland to Blues and New Orleans jazz.

Also look out for the free [Edinburgh Festival Carnival](#), a parade produced by Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, which will see over 500 carnival performers walk through the city. You can even take part – why not head to Out of The Blue Drill Hall for [free costume workshops](#) prior to the event? At Queen's Hall and Palazzo Spiegeltent under 16s are free accompanied with an adult, and students can also get standbys for just £5.

Edinburgh Art Festival

From daily city tours on George Street to a host of evening arts events during Art Late, there are a great range of free ways to enjoy this spectacular celebration of creativity. Many of the events are free and are part of GENERATION, the country-wide programme of events charting 25 years of contemporary art in Scotland.

Also check out the festival's [permanent commissions](#) which can be seen at locations across the city, including Martin Creed's Work No. 1059, 2011 on Scotsman Steps and Richard Wright: The Stairwell Project, 2010 at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.

For only £4 you can experience events such as Festival Detours, where Edinburgh's galleries come to life with performances of music, poetry and theatre.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Right at the start of the festival is an excellent time to bag yourself a great deal, and if you want to get started early, why not get money-off by attending previews? When the festival properly kicks off, bargain-hunters can enjoy the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2for1 on 4 – 5 August – [see the filter by 'special pricing' on the site](#) to find these and other offers. And it doesn't end there; check the [Virgin Money Half Price Hut](#) from 6 – 25 August for on-the-day offers.

Once you've wandered the Royal Mile to watch free Fringe show previews and enjoyed street entertainment in exchange for some loose change, you might think that the free and cheap options have been exhausted, but that's far from the case. The programme is brimming with hundreds of wonderful low-cost options, including free events such as [lunchtime concerts at St Giles' Cathedral](#) and the [BBC's free shows](#), as well as



the downright bizarre, like the interactive event [Phill Jupitus: Sketch Comic at the National Galleries of Scotland](#).

In recent years many comedians and performers have turned to gigging in bars and pubs in return for donations to support more free shows. Look no further than the extensive offerings from [PBH's Free Fringe](#), the Laughing Horse [Free Edinburgh Festival Fringe](#) and [La Favourita Freestival](#) for a variety of entertainment.

Watching as an audience member needn't be a static experience - there are many low-cost and free tours which let you explore the city on foot. Whether you want to join the [Free Historical Walking Tours of the Royal Mile](#), discover Edinburgh's magical side on [The Potter Trail](#), or take a map and audio guide along the [Memory Lane: Remembered/Imagined](#) art trail down the Water of Leith, you won't have to spend a penny!

Edinburgh International Festival

Possibly the most surprising of these tips is that even at the revered Edinburgh International Festival, you can land a cheap day out. This year there are £6 tickets for fascinating talks in the [Culture and Conflict](#)

series and for insightful [Conversations with Artists](#). This price also applies to the War on Film series, including the 1968 film [The Producers](#) and Steve McQueen's [Hunger](#).

Why not visit the festival's free exhibition: [Primordial: SuperNaturalBayiMinyirral](#) by Danie Mellor at National Museum of Scotland? Make the most of [special offers](#) such as 20 percent off when you buy tickets to all three James Plays, and deals for concessions including £8 on the day tickets for those who are aged 26 and under, and half price concession tickets after 30 July.

Finally, don't miss the festival finale, the [Virgin Money Fireworks Concert](#) on 31 August, when the sky above Edinburgh Castle will come to life with light accompanied by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Whether you pay for tickets in Princes Street Gardens or head to one of the free viewing areas you'll be treated to a night like no other.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Entry to Charlotte Square is free, so you can enjoy this great green space in the city, browse the bookshops and visit the cafés and bars at your



leisure. From author readings at [Ten at Ten](#) and children's entertainment at [Totseat's Are You Sitting Comfortably?](#) in the morning, to [Jura Unbound](#) eclectic music and spoken word in the Speigeltent in the evening, there's plenty of free entertainment too. Most of the festival tickets are around £10, offering a literary experience in a venue where you're bound to linger longer than just the duration of the paid-for event.

Edinburgh Mela

At only £4 for entry, the [Edinburgh Mela](#) is a seriously value-for-money event which promises to be quite the occasion in this, its 20th year. Your ticket will grant access to a bright festival of colour and culture where there will be music, dance, food, fashion and fun from around the world.

So take your pick from Edinburgh's Festivals and experience an amazing day out, no matter what your budget is - look out for even more special offers, competitions and giveaways on show flyers, websites, and social media.

HINTS AND TIPS

To avoid some of the trial and error of visiting the festivals we've rounded up some handy tips to help you to make the most of your time:

- 1 Plan itineraries and book ahead – shows can sell very fast once August arrives so don't rely on booking on the day if you really want to see that show!
- 2 But make sure to keep some time free and try a few word-of-mouth recommendations too.
- 3 Head to the Edinburgh VisitScotland Information Centre on Princes Street and pick up a map to get your bearings.
- 4 Go for a mixture of performances and get a feel for everything that is going on.
- 5 Don't miss a deal; look out for free shows, previews, discounted tickets, 2-for-1 ticket and the Virgin Money Half Price Hut.
- 6 Start your day early so you can secure the best festival tickets and see the most popular visitor attractions before they get too busy.
- 7 Bring a bag for all the flyers you'll pick up and keep a hold of them - you can look through them when you get a minute and decide what takes your fancy.
- 8 Wear comfy shoes – a day at the festivals can mean lots of walking.
- 9 Be diligent when crossing roads - the trams move especially quietly.
- 10 For a late night snack, visit George Square or Summerhall to find a whole range of mouth-watering food stalls, serving delicious street food, from crepes to curries.
- 11 Bring water!

AREA PROFILES

Exploring a city can be tricky if you don't know your way around, or even what to look out for. Get a flavour of what each area in the city has to offer using our area profiles and find out handy transport information on how to get there:



City centre

Named as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, Edinburgh's lively city centre is split into two sections – known as the [Old Town and the New Town](#) – by Edinburgh Waverley train station and the beautiful Princes Street Gardens. The city centre is a bustling hive of activity and will be the hub of your festival experience.

Old Town

Edinburgh's Old Town is a labyrinth of cobbled streets, narrow alleyways and hidden courtyards. At its centre, the famous Royal Mile runs from [Edinburgh Castle](#) to the [Palace of Holyroodhouse](#), while the streets leading off the Royal Mile – such as George IV Bridge

Street, Victoria Street and the Grassmarket – are home to some of the liveliest eating, shopping and sightseeing places in town. Head to the Royal Mile during the Festival Fringe and marvel at the vibrant street performers entertaining the crowds.

New Town

The neat and ordered New Town provides an elegant contrast to the labyrinth design of the Old Town. During July and August its broad streets flood with visitors and its chic bars and restaurants become hives of activity. Enjoy a meal or classy cocktail in the New Town and soak up the festival buzz.

West End and Haymarket

Home to the newly refurbished Haymarket train station, areas such as Murrayfield and Corstorphine in Edinburgh's West End offers a fantastic range of attractions that are perfect for a fun day out. Book tickets for a rugby match or concert at [Murrayfield Stadium](#), stretch your legs with a spot of ice skating at Murrayfield Ice Rink or enjoy some fun with the family at the superb [Edinburgh Zoo](#), home to the UK's only koalas and famous giant pandas.

Getting to West End and Haymarket:

- Walk from Princes Street to Haymarket (10-20 minutes)
- Edinburgh Trams from York Place (to Haymarket and Murrayfield Stadium)
- Airlink bus from Waverley Bridge (number 100)
- Lothian Buses from Princes Street to Corstorphine (number 12 & 26)



Stockbridge

Located to the north-west of the New Town, Stockbridge is renowned for its bohemian atmosphere, boutique shops and quality restaurants. Spend an afternoon in this charming part of the city and be sure to visit the stunning [Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh](#) which is close by.

Getting to Stockbridge:

- Walk from Princes Street (15-20 minutes)
- Lothian Buses (number 24 or 29 from Frederick Street & 27 from Hanover Street)

Leith and the coast

Considered by many to be a town in its own right, [Leith](#) is renowned for the quality of its dining options and is home to two of the city's five Michelin star restaurants, as well as a host of other great restaurants. Visit the [Royal Yacht Britannia](#), docked at [Ocean Terminal](#), or head to [Portobello](#) and enjoy a day at the beach.

Getting to Leith (the Shore):

- Walk from Princes Street (45 minutes)
- Lothian Buses (number 22 from Princes Street & 16 from York Place)

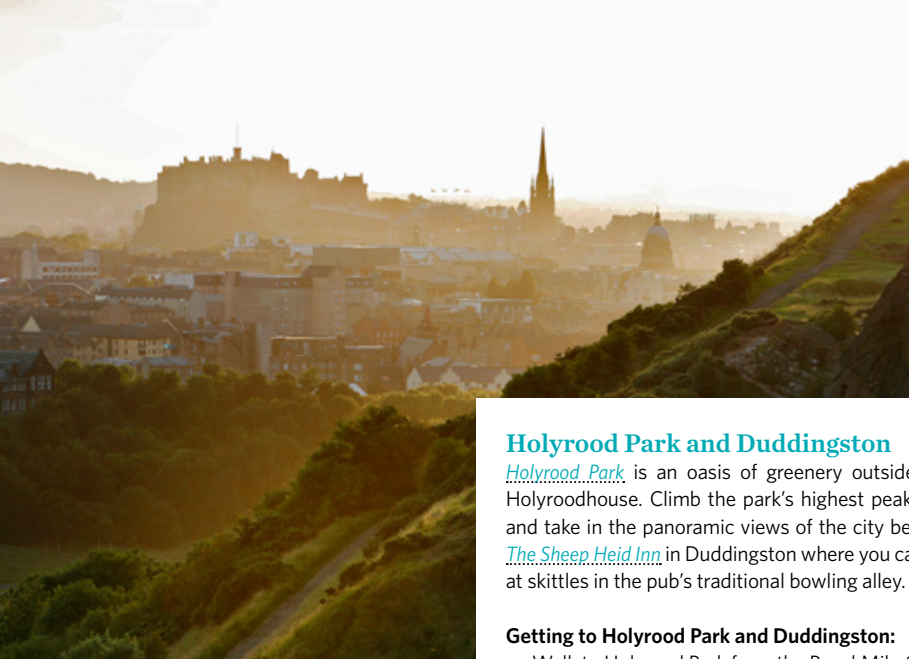


Calton Hill and Broughton

From the heights of Calton Hill to buzzing Broughton Street, this area of town, located to the east of the city centre, has lots of vibrant bars, restaurants and boutique shops on offer. Take an invigorating walk up Calton Hill before heading to Broughton Street for a tasty lunch in one of the street's relaxed eateries.

Getting to Broughton Street:

- Walk from Princes Street (5-10 minutes)



Holyrood Park and Duddingston

[Holyrood Park](#) is an oasis of greenery outside the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Climb the park's highest peak, Arthur's Seat, and take in the panoramic views of the city before heading to [The Sheep Heid Inn](#) in Duddingston where you can try your hand at skittles in the pub's traditional bowling alley.

Getting to Holyrood Park and Duddingston:

- Walk to Holyrood Park from the Royal Mile (5-10 minutes)
- Lothian Buses to Duddingston (number 113 from Princes Street, 44 from York Place & 4 from Leith Street)



South Edinburgh

The south side of Edinburgh is home to some of Edinburgh's most exclusive residential streets. The Marchmont, Bruntsfield and Morningside areas offer a range of boutique shops and elegant dining options. While you're in the Bruntsfield area, enjoy a drink at one of the world's oldest golf pubs, [Ye Olde Golf Tavern](#), founded in 1456.

Getting to South Edinburgh:

Marchmont

- Lothian Buses (number 41 from George IV Bridge & 5 from South Bridge)

Bruntsfield and Morningside

- Lothian Buses (number 23 from George IV Bridge & 45 or 5 from South Bridge)
- Lothian Buses (number 10, 11, 15, 16 & 36 from Lothian Road)



EXPLORING EDINBURGH

Edinburgh is a beautiful, compact city and you'll find it easy to get around on foot. The Official Edinburgh Festivals Map will give you the most up-to-date information regarding festival venues so you can plan your routes. The map is available at most Festival box offices and major venues from August and you can also pick up a copy at the VisitScotland Information Centre on Princes Street.

Getting around on foot

Walking is one of the easiest ways to get around Edinburgh, and it's also the best way to soak up the vibrant festival atmosphere. Taking a stroll along the famous Royal Mile while watching the street performers is a Fringe festival must, and a wander through Princes Street Gardens will reward you with one of the best views of the castle there is.

Most festival venues are within walking distance too. Taking the remarkable [Scott Monument](#) on Princes Street as a starting point, walking times to some of the larger festivals venues are as follows:

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival:

- Festival Club Tron Kirk (10 minutes)
- The Jazz Bar (10 minutes)
- Festival Theatre (15 minutes)
- Bistro Square (for the Palazzo Spiegel tent and 3 Bistro Place) (20 minutes)
- The Queen's Hall (25 minutes)

Edinburgh Art Festival:

- Scottish National Gallery (5 minutes)
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery (5 minutes)
- City Art Centre (10 minutes)

- The Fruitmarket Gallery (10 minutes)
- Dovecot Studios (15 minutes)
- Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (30 minutes)

Edinburgh Festival Fringe:

- Assembly Rooms (5 minutes)
- The Stand Comedy Club (10 minutes)
- The Pleasance Courtyard (15 minutes)
- Traverse Theatre (15 minutes)
- Fringe Central (The Gilded Balloon, Pleasance Dome, Underbelly at Bristo Square and BBC@POTTERROW) (20 minutes)





Edinburgh Tattoo:

- Castle Esplanade (10 minutes)

Edinburgh International Festival:

- The Hub (10 minutes)
- Usher Hall (10 minutes)
- Edinburgh Playhouse (10 minutes)
- Festival Theatre (15 minutes)
- The King's Theatre (25 minutes)

Edinburgh International Book Festival:

- Charlotte Square (10 minutes)

Edinburgh Mela:

- Leith Links in Leith (50 minutes)

Getting around by bike

Edinburgh is very cycle-friendly. The city has about 50 junctions with advance cycle stop lines and, at peak times, cyclists are allowed to share the buses' green lanes in and around the city centre.

[The Innertube Map project](#) is a great – and free – source of information for getting around the city on two wheels. For scenic and traffic-free routes, cycle campaign group [Spokes](#) have excellent maps of Edinburgh's extensive network of dedicated cycle routes.

Getting around by bus

Edinburgh's extensive bus routes cover the entire city and its outskirts. Most festival venues are near, if not on, the main bus routes. Single tickets cost £1.50, while DAYtickets cost just £3.50 and give unlimited journeys for one day on all [Lothian Buses](#) and [Edinburgh Trams](#) (to all stops excluding Edinburgh Airport).

As well as paying on the bus, you can also buy tickets in advance from one of the Lothian Buses offices or book tickets through the [Transport...for Edinburgh](#) smartphone app, which also has timetable information and real time departures to help you on your way.

Edinburgh City Bus Tour

Take in the sights of the city on a [guided bus tour](#). Tickets can be bought in person at the VisitScotland Information Centre on Princes Street or on Waverley Bridge (next to the main railway station, off Princes Street), which is where the tours start.

Getting around by tram

Edinburgh's tram line runs from Edinburgh Airport to York Place in the city centre, with regular stops along the line including at Haymarket Train Station in the city's West End.

Tickets within the city zone (to all stops excluding Edinburgh Airport) cost just £1.50 and are available from ticket vending machines on all tram platforms, and from the [Transport for Edinburgh app](#). DAYtickets, which cost just £3.50, give unlimited journeys for one day on all Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams (to all stops excluding Edinburgh Airport) and can also be purchased from ticket vending machines, any Lothian Bus driver or via the app.

Getting around by taxi

Black cabs and other taxi services are readily available throughout the city. Taxis can be pre-booked, picked up at one of the city's many taxi ranks or black cabs can be flagged down on the street. A taxi ride across the city centre usually costs between £6 and £10.

Getting around by car or motorcycle

Edinburgh is readily accessible by car or motorcycle, but it can often be easier to use public transport or one of the park & ride facilities.

Useful information on all aspects of parking and driving in Edinburgh, including where to find on-street and multi-storey parking, can be found on the City of Edinburgh Council [parking pages](#).

Park & ride

[Park & ride](#) is a great way to travel into Edinburgh city centre, letting someone else do the driving and avoiding parking charges. Edinburgh's main park & ride sites are located at Ingliston, Hermiston, Straiton, Sheriffhall and Wallyford which are all on key routes served by Lothian Buses.

Getting around by rickshaw

Travelling by bicycle-powered rickshaw can be a fun (and memorable) way to see the city, but the fare can vary depending on the length and amount of uphill climbs in your journey. Agree your journey price in advance and let pedal power take you on an adventure through some of Edinburgh's most famous streets.

Accessibility

Edinburgh is a compact city so wheelchair users or those with limited mobility will find it relatively easy to get around. Taxis can enter most places, including the Castle Esplanade for the Tattoo, and all Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams are wheelchair accessible.

Although Edinburgh can be busy during the summer months, as long as you give yourself plenty of time you shouldn't have a problem getting from A to B. Access information for venues can be found on their respective websites, and it's always worth calling ahead if you are unsure. For a local's tips on visiting the summer festivals in a wheelchair, [see this interview](#).



FESTIVALS AND SIMILAR YEAR-ROUND EDINBURGH ATTRACTIONS

Although the festivals only happen once a year, these quirky suggestions will help you to recreate some of the magic from your favourite festival all year round.

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival - Head to [Whigams Wine Cellars](#) on Charlotte Square on Sunday and Tuesday nights and soak up the atmosphere of their open mic Jazz Club.

Edinburgh Art Festival - Stimulate your senses and discover how artists use optical illusions in their work at [Camera Obscura and the World of Illusions](#) on Castlehill.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe - Immerse yourself in the other-worldly atmosphere of [Mary King's Close](#), just off the Royal Mile, and listen as talented performers bring its stories to life.

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo - Climb Calton Hill and visit the 12-columned National Monument, commemorating the Scottish servicemen who lost their lives in the Napoleonic Wars.

Edinburgh International Festival - Climb aboard the [Royal Yacht Britannia](#) and learn about the places that this former Royal vessel has visited in its illustrious sea-faring career.

Edinburgh International Book Festival - See personal items belonging to three of Scotland's most influential writers - Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns - at [The Writer's Museum](#) just off the Royal Mile.

Edinburgh Mela - Like the Mela, [Jupiter Artland](#) is located in a wonderful green space outside the city centre. Enjoy walks through the trees in this scenic spot and the works of art that are installed throughout the gardens.



WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

Edinburgh is packed with places to eat that will suit every budget and taste, so you're bound to uncover a new favourite during your time in the city. From enjoying a meal to remember in one of the city's five Michelin-star restaurants to re-energising between shows with a coffee and some cake, dining out is sure to be a highlight of your festival break.

Restaurants

Scotland's capital city is home to more restaurants per head than in any other city in the UK. During August the city's restaurants get very busy so it is always best to reserve a table where possible. If you haven't already booked, dining outside regular lunch and dinner times will make it easier to get the whole family around a table.

Although there are many excellent restaurants waiting to be discovered all over Edinburgh, we've noted down a small selection of what's available to get you started:

- [Henderson's](#), **Hanover Street** - wonderful vegetarian cuisine at budget friendly prices.
- [Viva Mexico](#), **Cockburn Street** - taste bud tingling Mexican dishes.
- [Ecco Vino](#), **Cockburn Street** - classic Italian meals.
- [Vittoria Italian Restaurant](#), **George IV Bridge Street and Leith Walk** - delicious pizza and some of the best ice cream in the city.
- [The Dogs](#), **Hanover Street** - top-notch, budget friendly food in cheery surroundings.
- [Amicus Apple](#), **Frederick Street** - trendy pub food and delicious cocktails.
- [Joseph Pearce's](#), **Elm Row** - out of the ordinary dishes and a laid back Swedish atmosphere.
- [Wedgwood](#), **Royal Mile** - stylish dishes made using some of Scotland's best ingredients.
- [Ondine](#), **George IV Bridge** - sumptuous seafood.
- [Harvey Nichols Forth Floor Restaurant](#), **St Andrew Square** - fine dining and fantastic views.
- [Khublai Khan's](#), **Assembly Street** - sizzling meats, including exotic delicacies such as kangaroo and zebra, barbecued to perfection on an upturned shield.
- [The Ship on the Shore](#), **Leith** - fresh seafood and sparkling champagne.
- [The Witchery](#), **Royal Mile** - indulgent food served in a magical atmosphere.
- [The Plumed Horse](#), **Henderson Street** - high end British cuisine, famed for its delightful tasting menu.



Michelin-star

Edinburgh is home to five restaurants with the coveted Michelin-star status, the second highest outside London. Here's where you'll find them:

- [Restaurant Martin Wishart, The Shore](#) - recipient of Edinburgh's first Michelin-star in 2000, Martin Wishart's Edinburgh restaurant is renowned for its French style cuisine and signature seafood dishes.
- [The Kitchen, Commercial Quay](#) - Tom Kitchin uses the freshest local ingredients in dishes that are straight 'From Nature to Plate'.
- [21212, Royal Terrace](#) - Edinburgh's only Michelin star restaurant with rooms, Paul Kitching's 21212 changes its innovative menu weekly and is a haven for wine lovers.
- [Number One at the Balmoral Hotel, Princes Street](#) - Jeff Bland serves up sumptuous dishes blending Scottish and French cuisine.
- [Castle Terrace Restaurant, Castle Terrace](#) - the Kitchen's sister restaurant and recipient of Edinburgh's latest Michelin-star in 2011. Dominic Jack uses traditional French cooking techniques to deliver modern British cuisine that uses the freshest local ingredients.

Café culture

Take a break from the festival buzz as you enjoy a tasty lunch or re-charge your batteries between shows with a frothy coffee and a delicious sweet treat. Here are some suggestions:

- [Shakespeare for Breakfast, C venues](#) - returning for its 23rd year, this famous Fringe show provides 60 minutes of entertainment, free coffee and croissants.

- [The Baked Potato Shop, Cockburn Street](#) - massive baked potatoes with delicious vegetarian fillings.
- [The Mosque Kitchen, Nicolson Square](#) - terrific value for money and some of the best curry in Edinburgh.
- [Elephant House Café, George IV Bridge](#) - famous in recent years as one of the birthplaces of *Harry Potter* but deserves a visit in its own right for its delicious cakes, artisan coffee and gourmet teas.
- [Peter's Yard, Simpson Loan and Deanhaugh Street](#) - a lovely relaxed atmosphere and tempting artisan baked goods.

Bars and pubs

Edinburgh is renowned for the variety of its trendy bars and traditional pubs. Areas like Rose Street, George Street, Broughton Street, Grassmarket and the Shore are good places to get started, but there are many more quirky pubs and bars all over Edinburgh for you to discover. Try these for some inspiration:

- [Milnes Bar, Rose Street](#) - re-fuel with some hearty pub food or enjoy a dram.
- [Le Monde, George Street](#) - classy drinks in stylish surroundings.
- [The White Hart Inn, Grassmarket](#) - reputed to be Edinburgh's oldest pub, sip a drink of your choice in historic surroundings.
- [Whistle Binkies, South Bridge](#) - live music every day and free entry from Sunday to Thursday.
- [The Royal Oak, Infirmary Street](#) - traditional tunes and hearty pints, just a few minutes' walk from the Royal Mile.
- [Dragonfly, West Port](#) - not just your usual drinks menu, choose one of 30 delicious cocktails.

TOP TEN MOST VISITED ATTRACTIONS IN EDINBURGH

1 National Museum of Scotland

Discover a treasure trove of ancient artefacts at the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street - *the most popular attraction in the UK outside of London*. See precious objects, including Napoleon's silver gilt tea service, and meet the museum's 12 metre long life-sized skeleton cast of a fearsome T-rex.

2 Edinburgh Castle

Set atop an extinct volcano, iconic Edinburgh Castle has dominated the skyline of Scotland's capital for centuries. Arrive early to beat the crowds (the castle opens at 9:30am) and marvel at Scotland's sparkling crown jewels, the Honours of Scotland, as well as the famous Stone of Destiny - used during the coronation of countless kings and queens.

3 St Giles' Cathedral

Want to see some of Edinburgh's most impressive architecture up close? Visit the magnificent St Giles' Cathedral, located halfway down the historic Royal Mile, and marvel at its Victorian stained glass windows, gothic style stonework and high vaulted ceiling.

4 Scottish National Gallery

Enjoy free entry to the Scottish National Gallery, located on the Mound, and admire works by acclaimed Scottish artists displayed alongside world-renowned masterpieces, including paintings by Raphael, Velázquez, Vermeer, Monet, Cézanne and Van Gogh.

5 Edinburgh Zoo

Take the kids on an animal adventure at Edinburgh Zoo. See over 1,000 animals from every corner of the globe, including the UK's only giant pandas, march with the penguins on their famous Penguin Parade and get closer to chimpanzees than you ever thought possible.

6 Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Escape the bustle of the festivals and enjoy a magical afternoon at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. This oasis of tranquillity is located just a short 20 minute walk from Princes Street and is considered to be one of the finest gardens in the world.

7 National War Museum

Uncover Scotland's military past and see stunning displays of traditional uniforms, weapons, medals, paintings, and silverware at the National War Museum, set within the walls of Edinburgh Castle. Entry is included in your admission to the castle.

8 Edinburgh Bus Tours

Whizz around the city on a themed open top bus tour and discover the history of some of Edinburgh's most remarkable sights and attractions. Tours start at Waverley Bridge, outside Waverley Train Station.

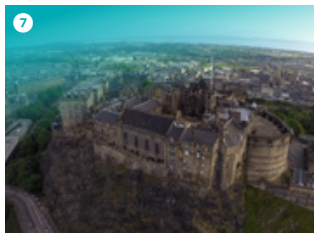
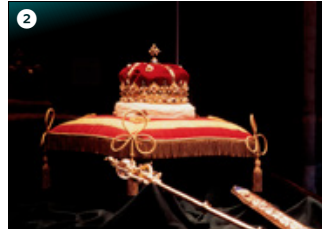
9 The Scottish Parliament

Visit Scotland's modern Parliament building, located at the foot of the Royal Mile. Take a tour to see the debating chamber, learn about the parliament system, admire the building's architecture and marvel at its art collection.

10 The Scotch Whisky Experience

Improve your whisky knowledge at the Scotch Whisky Experience, located just off the Royal Mile. Take a barrel ride through a replica distillery, discover how whisky is made, and learn about the whisky regions.

The city of Edinburgh is bursting with *attractions* to keep you entertained all day long. Discover more *things to do*, as well as exciting *family attractions* and *free days out*.





HIDDEN GEMS

There's even more to Edinburgh than meets the eye! Keep an eye out for these hidden gems as you wander around the city.

Archivist's Garden

Tucked behind the General Registrar's Office on the east end of Princes Street, the little-known Archivist's Garden is a hidden gem overflowing with colourful plants of 57 species, all connected in some way to Scotland's past.

Pommery Champagne Bar

Relax in the beautiful Signet Library, one of Edinburgh's architectural gems, as it opens the fabulous Pommery Champagne Bar for the festival. Open 1 - 25 August, indulge in a scrumptious afternoon tea or splash out on a glass of fine champagne in a truly gorgeous setting.

Sky Bar at the DoubleTree by Hilton

Enjoy views of Edinburgh by night while you listen to live jazz and sip on a cocktail at the Sky Bar, open on the first Thursday of every month. These themed events offer exclusive access to the penthouse floor of the DoubleTree by Hilton, with a capacity of just 90 lucky people.

Dunbar's Close Gardens

This lovely garden is hidden away in a little close just off the Royal Mile, providing a haven of tranquillity amidst the buzz of the city centre. Laid out in 17th century style with neat shrubs and flower beds, it's the ideal place for a picnic or a breather between shows.

Waverley Station market

Check out the pop-up market on platform 2 of Waverley Station every Friday throughout the year, or Fri-Sun during August. Stock up on local produce such as venison pies and chutney from the food stalls, plus clothes, arts & crafts and more.

Scott Monument

Princes Street's 'Gothic rocket ship' is hard to miss, but many visitors don't realise it's possible to climb to the top of the Scott Monument for great views over the city centre. If you don't fancy taking the stairs, enjoy the sights from the Ferris Wheel beside the monument, open 14 July - 31 August.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Edinburgh's city centre is abuzz with activity during the summer, but there's much more to see off the beaten track. Take a breather with a trip to one of our recommended areas, all just a short walk away.



The Shore

Many of the finest bars and restaurants in the city are located at the Shore, a picturesque area of Leith in the north of Edinburgh. Here you'll find everything from quirky cafés to Michelin-star restaurants – there's even a cocktail bar on a boat.

Dean Village

Bordering the Water of Leith, the Dean Village boasts some of the city's most wonderful architecture, from distinctive sandstone mills to stylish Tudor revivals. Follow the peaceful path along the water's edge and towards Leith, looking out for statues along the way.

Gilmerton Cove (tours by appointment only)

Located on the south side of Edinburgh, Gilmerton Cove is a series of hand-carved passageways and chambers hidden beneath the city streets. Its purpose is still a mystery - some think it was a drinking den for gentry, others a secret hideout or a smuggler's lair.

Blackford Hill

One of the seven hills of Edinburgh, enjoy panoramic views over the city skyline, Arthur's Seat and the Pentland Hills from the lesser-visited Blackford Hill. It's also a great spot for astronomy lovers, with the Royal Observatory sitting atop the hill.



The view towards Largo and Largo Law from near Ruddons Point, on the route of the Fife Coastal Path



EXPLORING FURTHER AFIELD

A trip to Scotland's capital can be the perfect starter or climax to a longer holiday around Scotland. Located on the central belt, with easy access to the Forth road and rail bridges, Edinburgh is ideally located for exploring the rest of Scotland.

If you've come to Edinburgh for the festivals, we know your days are probably already full to bursting with things you want to see in the city itself. If you only have a short amount of time to see what the rest of Scotland has to offer this handy guide will help you find out where you can get to, and how long it will take to drive there.

Head north for:

The Kingdom of Fife: 30 minutes – 2 hours

Make a memory that will last a lifetime by journeying across the impressive Forth Road Bridge and into the magical Kingdom of Fife, home to some of Scotland's most wonderful beaches. Follow the [glorious coastal](#)

[path](#) along the sparkling coastline and look out for delicious fish and chips in the quaint fishing villages you pass through. The region is a haven for [golf](#) fans too. Why not challenge your skills on one of the glorious parkland or sea-view links courses? You could also explore places that were once known by famous historic figures. [Dunfermline Abbey](#) is the resting place of Robert the Bruce's body and [Falkland Palace](#) was Mary Queen of Scots' favourite summer home.

Perthshire: 1 hour

Meander along pretty streets in the 'fair city' of Perth and explore the region's [lush countryside](#). Famous for



Dunfermline Abbey and graveyard



The Jacobite steam train on Glenfinnan Viaduct



Blair Castle

its majestic glens and historic forests, Perthshire's stunning countryside and mature woodland will give you plenty of opportunity to admire the region's impressive scenery. Visit one of the many parks and beautifully-kept gardens, including [Branklyn Garden](#) and the [Beatrix Potter Exhibition and Garden](#) in the nearby town of [Birnham](#). Absorb yourself in the history of the area at attractions including the impressive [Black Watch Castle and Museum](#), historic [Scone Palace](#) and beautiful [Blair Castle](#).

The Highlands: 2.5 hours - 6 hours

The incomparable beauty of the Scottish Highlands has to be seen to be believed. Get up close to some

amazing animals, including the elusive Scottish wildcat, at the [Highland Wildlife Park](#) and take part in some thrilling outdoor pursuits with an adventure company. Travel on the Jacobite steam train across the beautiful Glenfinnan Viaduct to [Mallaig](#) and follow the same route as the Hogwarts Express from the *Harry Potter* films. The Highlands is also home to the country's only [Malt Whisky Trail](#). Follow the trail around stunning countryside and visit some of the famous distilleries in one of Scotland's best known whisky regions, Speyside.

Head south for:

Midlothian: 15 minutes

Midlothian's beautiful countryside is home to several impressive historic attractions, including lordly [Crichton Castle](#). Feel the atmosphere of a piece of living history at world-famous [Rosslyn Chapel](#), made famous by the *Da Vinci Code*, and marvel at the intricate carvings in this working church and the original architects' plans etched onto a wall in the downstairs Sacristy. The [Pentland Hills Regional Park](#) boasts river valleys, woods and hills, making it an ideal setting for all kinds of outdoor activities. Kids (and grown-ups!) will love the [National Mining Museum](#) and [Edinburah Butterfly & Insect World](#).

Scottish Borders: 1 hour 15 minutes

The Scottish Borders encompass a lowland landscape of medieval abbeys and historic towns. Famed for its breathtaking scenery and lush countryside, the Scottish Borders is home to some of Scotland's most impressive gardens, which you can discover by following the [homes and gardens itinerary](#). Go on a literary pilgrimage and visit [Abbotsford](#), the home of Sir Walter Scott, or take an energetic walk along the [Sir Walter Scott Way](#). The four [Borders Abbeys](#) are all within an easy drive of one another and offer you a unique insight into medieval Scotland through their impressive architecture.

Head east for:

East Lothian: 30 minutes - 1 hour

Famous for its beautiful towns and unspoilt beaches, East Lothian is one of the sunniest parts of Scotland and is a mecca for surfing, sailing and watersport enthusiasts. Take the kids to explore the area's beautiful beaches or enjoy a memorable day out at the [Scottish Seabird Centre](#) in [North Berwick](#). Control the cameras in the discovery centre to see puffins, gannets and kittiwakes or even take a boat trip out to the famous Bass Rock and see the rock's

impressive colony of gannets. East Lothian is also home to 22 links and parklands golf courses including the [Open Championship course at Muirfield](#) and the popular links courses in [Dunbar](#), [North Berwick](#) and [Gullane](#).

Head west for:

West Lothian: 30 minutes

Visit the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots at splendid [Linlithgow Palace](#), and watch swans and ducks paddling on Linlithgow Loch. Head to the fun filled [Five Sisters Zoo](#) in West Calder, where animals including lemurs, arctic wolves and cheeky meerkats will keep everyone entertained. The terrific Scottish Owl Centre at [Polkemmet Country Park](#) is also well worth visiting. See one of the largest owl collections in the world, feel birds swooshing past your head on a flying demonstration in the low roofed barn and have your photo taken with one of the stars of the show. Get active and enjoy a long walk in the Bathgate Hills, or spend a day at [Beecraigs Country Park](#) and let the kids blow off steam on the spider net climbing frame or flying fox.

Stirling: under 1 hour

The majestic city of Stirling was once the capital of Scotland and is packed with history. Visit the atmospheric [Bannockburn battlefield](#) on the outskirts of the city, beautiful [Stirling Castle](#) in the city centre and the dramatic [National Wallace Monument](#), perched on a rugged hillside. Look out for the [Kelpies](#) on your journey to Stirling too. These magnificent horse-like sculptures stand at 30 metres tall - making them the world's largest equine sculptures - and can easily be seen from the M9 on your drive to or from Stirling. If you have time, stop off in [The Helix Park](#) and visit them for yourself.

Glasgow: 1 hour

The great city of Glasgow is ideally placed for either a day trip or a longer holiday. Vibrant and energetic, Scotland's largest city is famous for its culture, style and the friendliness of its people. You'll find lots to do with internationally-acclaimed museums and galleries, stunning architecture, vibrant nightlife, fantastic shopping and a diverse range of restaurants and bars.

Feeling inspired? Scotland has many more exciting [regions](#) just waiting to be discovered, from exploring the famous fairy pools on [Skye](#) or visiting [Robert Burns' birthplace](#) in [Ayrshire](#) to seeing colourful Harris Tweed spun on the [Isle of Harris](#), or island hopping your way around the awe inspiring [Orkney islands](#).



The Kelpies

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Wondering how to properly pronounce the likes of Cockburn, Broughton or Buccleuch? Our handy pronunciation guide is here to help:

Edinburgh (*Ed-n-buh-ruh*)

Lothian (*Low-thee-an*)

Waverley (*Wave-er-ley*)

Leith (*Lee-th*)

Corstorphine (*Cor-stor-fin*)

Holyrood (*Holly-rood*)

Teviot (*Teev-iot*)

Lauriston (*Lor-is-ton*)

Princes Street (often mispronounced as 'Princess Street', this busy thoroughfare was actually named after the reigning King George's sons, aka the Princes)

Cockburn Street (*Co-burn Street*)

Broughton Street (*Braw-ton Street*)

Buccleuch Street/Place (*Buck-loo Street/Place*)

Crichton Street (*Cry-ton Street*)

Raeburn Place (*Ray-burn Place*)

Cheyne Street (*Cheen Street*)



FESTIVAL FAMILIES

*“I love the people here, they are so nice and friendly.
Edinburgh is a real classy city.”*

Beyonce Knowles



THE EDINBURGH FESTIVALS FOR KIDS

Edinburgh in summer is the perfect place for kids, with fantastic festivals jam-packed with shows for all ages and dozens of exciting attractions all across the city.

Get a glimpse of the UK's only giant pandas at [Edinburgh Zoo](#), be amazed by illusions at [Camera Obscura and World of Illusions](#), or check out what's on at the festivals' children's programmes - with hundreds of great shows and activities, you're sure to find something to keep kids of all ages entertained this summer.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

The Book Festival includes the [Baillie Gifford Children's Programme](#), offering hundreds of events for kids and young adults. Each day begins with Totseat's *Are You Sitting Comfortably?*, a free event for all ages featuring poems, songs, stories or rhymes, followed by a fantastic line-up of readings, drop-in activities and workshops.

Little ones can sing along with nursery rhymes at free Bookbug and Rhymetime sessions throughout the festival, or tuck their toys in for a free Teddy Bear Sleepover on 22 August. For primary aged kids, you'll find readings and activities with much-loved authors

such as Jacqueline Wilson and Judith Kerr, while teenagers can enjoy talks from some of the biggest names in Young Adult literature.

Find new summer reads at the on-site children's bookshop, or visit Dr. Book on 15 August to be prescribed some inspiring new stories. There are lots of opportunities to get creative too: join renowned illustrators at the festival's Big Draw on 15 and 17 August or design your own comics on 23 August, all for artistic kids of all ages.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

As always, the Fringe keeps the whole family happy with its exciting programme of fun, festivities and entertainment. This year you'll find more than 170 shows especially for kids on offer, from bubble art and sing-alongs to circuses, ghost tours, and more. Get the little ones moving at [Baby Loves Disco](#), held in Electric Circus, with real DJs, free face painting and a dressing-up corner, all washed down with juice for kids and a licensed drinks bar for grown-ups.



Edinburgh Butterfly & Insect World



National Museum of Scotland



Our Dynamic Earth

Also located at Electric Circus, [Pop Lock-In](#) hosts street dancing, karaoke and Guitar Hero for primary-school kids, as well as a VIP parents' room. For older kids and teens, you'll find hundreds of plays, concerts and performances suitable for all ages in the general Fringe line-up - why not catch a few comedians, see a musical, or enjoy some dance and drama?

In between shows, chill out in the KidZone in the Pleasance Courtyard, where you can relax with a coffee or lunch while the kids play with a collection of toys. This is also where you'll find the giant igloo, a special children's theatre offering a wonderful line-up of performances.

Edinburgh Mela

Free for under-12s and just £4 for adults per day, the Edinburgh Mela offers two full days of great-value family fun. Last year's Mela Kidzone was focused on nature, encouraging kids to Go Wild, and 2014 promises to be just as fun. The highly interactive programme includes music, creative arts workshops

and much more. Join in the fun, fill up on tasty food from the Global Food Village and enjoy dozens of fantastic performances on offer as part of this exciting showcase of cultural diversity.

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

Don't miss the spectacular performances of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, which takes place on Castle Esplanade every night from 1 - 23 August, or the wonderful displays at the Virgin Money Fireworks Concert when the International Festival comes to an end on 1 September - both fantastic experiences for all the family.

Edinburgh attractions

Edinburgh's festivals offer more than enough to keep you busy, but make sure you leave time to check out some of the capital's fantastic attractions too!

Amongst the excitement of the buzzing Royal Mile you'll find a great range of things to see and do. Be dazzled by optical illusions at [Camera Obscura and](#)



Panda in Edinburgh Zoo.

[World of Illusions](#), pop into the lovely [Scottish Storytelling Centre](#) to enjoy tales from the interactive Storywall, or discover toys and games from yesteryear at the [Museum of Childhood](#).

Journey back millions of years at [Our Dynamic Earth](#), a fantastic interactive centre featuring 3D and 4D experiences and excellent hands-on exhibits. Come face-to-face with dinosaurs, feel the chill of polar ice or journey into space in the high-definition 360° Showdome.

The [National Museum of Scotland](#) offers free entry and an astonishing range of exhibits. Kids will love exploring the Animal World gallery, where they can see magnificent beasts and the skeleton of a T-Rex, and get hands-on with technology in the Connect and Communicate! sections.

[Edinburgh Zoo](#) is another must for the whole family – see the UK's only giant pandas and koalas, or catch the famous penguin parade. Look out for Colonel-in-Chief Sir Nils Olav, a King penguin who was granted a Norwegian knighthood in 2008!

[Gorajie City Farm](#) is free to enter and a great day out for the whole family: meet sheep, goats, rabbits, guinea pigs and tortoises, and enjoy home-cooked food at the cosy café, all in the heart of the city. Younger children will also love [Edinburgh Butterfly & Insect World](#)

in nearby Lasswade, where they can handle snakes, millipedes and tarantulas and see a spectrum of gorgeous butterflies from around the world.

For kids big enough to handle the city's spooky side, brave the [Edinburgh Dungeon](#) or explore a chain of creepy vaults on a ghost tour – there are lots to choose from, each one recounting scary tales of Edinburgh's fascinating past.

You can also discover some of the city's oldest secrets at the [Real Mary King's Close](#), a hidden network of underground streets where people lived and worked between the 17th and 19th centuries.

Rainy days don't need to limit your fun, either. Try [Urban Paintball](#) in Leith, Scotland's first indoor paintball arena for ages 11 and up, or split into teams for a game of LaserQuest on Dalry Road (minimum height 105 cm).

Another fantastic option is the [Edinburgh International Climbing Arena](#), located in nearby Ratho. Little ones can also keep busy at Scrambles, a great soft play area with slides, mini climbing walls and an interactive Flasma floor, all for ages 0 – 9, while older kids can tackle the bigger walls.

For more great ideas on things to see and do with the kids in Edinburgh, have a look at our [family days out page](#).



LGBT EDINBURGH

“I’ve seen the castle, I’ve eaten in fantastic restaurants, and the people here are brilliant.”

Christina Aguilera





Edinburgh's vibrant gay scene welcomes scores of new guests in the summer, with LGBT visitors and their friends flocking to Scotland for the fantastic festivals.

You're sure to enjoy a warm welcome not only in the capital's gay bars, but in all venues around Edinburgh; the entire city is very open and LGBT-friendly, and the electric atmosphere during the summer months is unforgettable.

The festivals always include a wide range of shows discussing LGBT+ issues. The Fringe, in particular, includes a colourful selection of shows based around gay or trans themes - you'll find dance, drama, musical theatre, stand-up comedy and much more on this year's exciting programme.

In between shows, enjoy a drink or a bite to eat at one of the great bars and cafés recommended below, many of which are located in the area around Broughton Street and the top of Leith Walk. Look out for pop-up club nights around the city, like Hot Mess at the Annexe, Scissor at the Mash House or DIVE Queer Party at Henry's Cellar Bar, or find more LGBT events in Edinburgh.

The Regent, 2 Montrose Terrace

Dubbed 'the best real ale gay pub in Edinburgh', this relaxed, dog-friendly bar has twice won CAMRA's Edinburgh Pub of the Year Award. Its loyal following of regulars, both gay and straight, love the pub's relaxed atmosphere and its great selection of ales.

The Street, 2 Picardy Place

This gay-friendly bar offers a great selection of cocktails and a tasty menu of burgers, wraps and nachos in a relaxed, stylish locale. Themed nights and pub quizzes take place during the week, and you can even commemorate your evening in the bar's old-school photo booth.

Café Nom de Plume, 60 Broughton Street

This cosy café is famed for its friendly staff and hearty home-style cooking. Eccentrically decorated with fairy lights and quirky knick-knacks, it serves up simple yet delicious dishes such as fish pie or haggis, neeps and tatties, with lots of vegetarian options and an impressive choice of beers.

Café Habana, 22 Greenside Place

Sandwiched between CC Blooms and the Playhouse Theatre, the ever-busy Café Habana is ideal for a pre- or post-show beverage. Friendly and unpretentious, it offers good value drinks accompanied by pop and dance tunes.

CC Blooms, 23-24 Greenside Place

CC Blooms is something of an institution, having been a vital part of Edinburgh's gay scene for more than two decades. During the day it offers a range of dishes in its elegant upstairs diner, while the evening sees it transformed into a vibrant cocktail bar with a buzzing downstairs dance floor.

Planet Bar, 6 Baxter's Place

A popular choice for pre-drinks before a night out, Planet Bar offers good value deals, comfy seats and a pool table, plus quizzes and karaoke on certain nights of the week.

SPOTLIGHTED LGBT EVENTS

Lady Like

Bristo Square Underbelly, 31 Jul - 24 Aug

Known to her neighbours as 'the mad cat lady', Scottish comedian Susan Calman returns to the Fringe with a brand new show after a highly-acclaimed run last year.

Away From Home

Assembly George Square Theatre,

31 Jul - 11 Aug, 13 - 24 Aug

This edgy and moving one-man show from Hartshorn - Hook Productions and Working Progress Theatre tells the story of Kyle, whose life is changed forever when he falls in love with a closeted Premiership footballer.

X and Y

Various venues, 1 - 10, 16 - 24 Aug

Black Dingo Productions presents the story of Natalie, a Glaswegian transgendered woman, and follows her life from Edinburgh's Commonwealth Games in 1986 to Glasgow 2014.

iLove

Dance Base, 20 - 24 Aug

A male dance performance from Italian duo Fattoria Vittadini, who created the piece as a couple then worked on it after splitting up - an honest exploration of harmony in love, work and life.

Outings

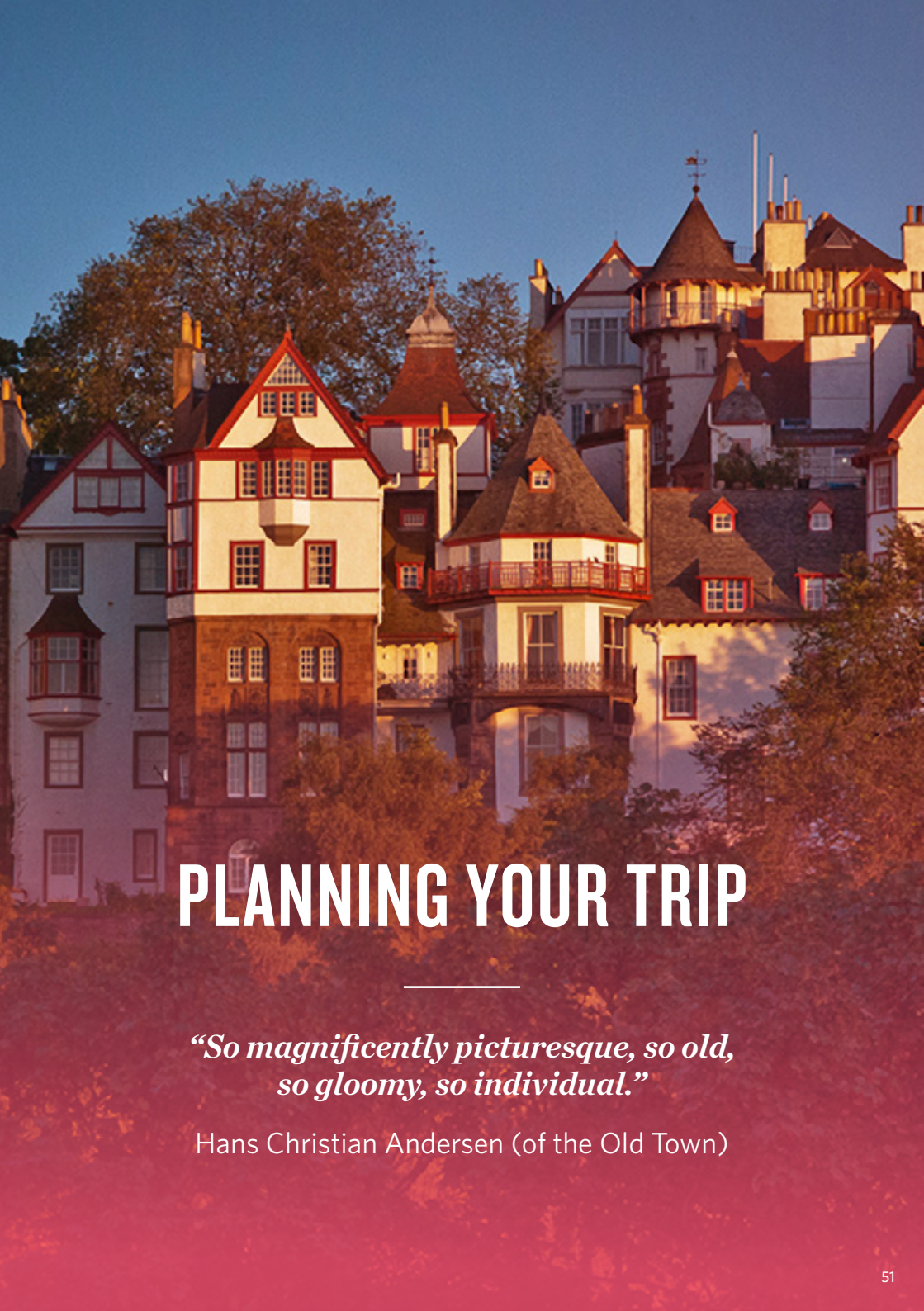
Gilded Balloon, 30 Jul - 25 Aug (not 6, 13 or 21)

Inspired by Tom Daley's famous coming out video, this series of funny and touching performances by Seabright Productions sees a rotating cast of actors and comedians relate real-life coming out stories.

Loud & Proud on the Fringe

St Cuthbert's Church, 23 Aug

Fresh from representing Scotland at the Various Voices festival in Dublin, Loud & Proud LGBT choir is set to perform a crowd-pleasing repertoire of pop anthems, gospel and more, all in support of charity Waverley Care.



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

*“So magnificently picturesque, so old,
so gloomy, so individual.”*

Hans Christian Andersen (of the Old Town)



TRAVELLING TO EDINBURGH

As Scotland's capital, Edinburgh is a major transport hub and you'll find many travel options for getting to the city. Coach, rail, ferry and air links are all very good and driving is straightforward, so, no matter how you choose to get here, starting your festival adventure couldn't be easier.



Taking the train

Edinburgh has two main train stations: Edinburgh Waverley, which is in the heart of the city centre by Princes Street, and Haymarket, which lies a mile or so west of Princes Street.

Travelling to Edinburgh by train takes around:

London - 4.5 hours	York - 2.5 hours
Birmingham - 4/5 hours	Aberdeen - 2.5 hours
Manchester - 4 hours	Newcastle - 1.5 hours
Inverness - 3.5 hours	Glasgow - 50 minutes



Travelling by bus or coach

Edinburgh's main bus depot is located in the heart of the city, close to St Andrew Square, and fares from London start at just £20 return.

Travelling to Edinburgh by coach takes around:

London - 10 hours	Aberdeen - 3.5 hours
Birmingham - 7 hours	Newcastle - 3 hours
Manchester - 6 hours	Glasgow - 1/1.5 hours
Inverness - 4 hours	



Travelling by car

Edinburgh has good connections to the Scottish motorway so it's easy to drive from anywhere in Scotland or the rest of the UK.

National Tourist Routes

Make your drive to Edinburgh an unforgettable one. The following well-signposted [National Tourist Routes](#) pass through some of Scotland's most awe-inspiring scenery, with visitor attractions along the way.

The Fife Coastal Tourist Route

Journey through spectacular scenery and charming towns as you drive along Fife's sparkling coastline.

The Forth Valley Tourist Route

Running from Stirling to Edinburgh, this scenic route provides stunning views of the mighty Forth road and rail bridges.

The Borders Historic Route

A charming drive through royal market towns and impressive scenery from the English city of Carlisle to Scotland's capital, Edinburgh.

Driving to Edinburgh:

London - 8/10 hours
Birmingham - 5.5 hours
York - 4.5 hours
Manchester - 4 hours
Inverness - 3.5 hours
Aberdeen - 3 hours
Newcastle - 2.5 hours
Glasgow - 1 hour



Taking the ferry

Although there are no direct ferry services to Edinburgh, the city can be easily reached by road from ports in England and the south west of Scotland.

Ferries sail to the following ports:

Europe - Hull (*drive from Hull to Edinburgh in 5 hours*)

Europe - Newcastle (*drive from Newcastle to Edinburgh in 2.5 hours*)

Belfast - Cairnryan (*drive from Cairnryan to Edinburgh in under 3 hours*)



Flying

The airport is located just outside the city, and there are regular bus, taxi and tram services into the centre. Further routes fly to Glasgow International, Glasgow Prestwick and Newcastle International Airport, all of which have good rail and road connections to Edinburgh.



GETTING TICKETS AND PROGRAMMES

Find out where you can view the full programmes for Edinburgh's festivals and how to book and collect tickets. Booking fees may apply – please see the official festival websites for details.

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

View the programme online at edinburghjazzfestival.com, or collect a copy from shops and venues around Edinburgh.

BOOK ONLINE: edinburghjazzfestival.com

BY PHONE: +44 (0)131 473 2000

IN PERSON: Hub Tickets, The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE

Edinburgh Art Festival

View the programme online at edinburghartfestival.com. Most exhibitions are free. Where there is a charge, entry fees can be paid at the venue.

Some special events may need to be booked in advance – please see website for full details.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

View and download the programme online. You can also order a copy from edfringe.com – please note, delivery can take up to 7 days (12 for international orders) and postage and packaging charges apply. Copies are also available from venues across the UK, such as Waterstones and Fopp.

BOOK ONLINE: edfringe.com

BY PHONE: +44 (0)131 226 0000

IN PERSON: The Fringe Box Office, 180 High Street, EH1 1QS

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

View the programme online at edintattoo.co.uk

BOOK ONLINE: edintattoo.co.uk

BY PHONE: +44 (0)131 225 1188

IN PERSON: The Tattoo Ticket Sales Office, 33-34 Market Street, Edinburgh



Edinburgh International Festival

View the programme online at eif.co.uk, download in PDF format, or collect a copy from shops and outlets such as Waterstones.

BOOK ONLINE: eif.co.uk

BY PHONE: +44 (0)131 473 2000

IN PERSON: Hub Tickets, The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE

Edinburgh International Book Festival

View the programme online at edbookfest.co.uk, download in PDF format, or collect a copy from shops and outlets such as Waterstones.

BOOK ONLINE: edbookfest.co.uk

BY PHONE: +44 (0)845 373 5888

IN PERSON: Book Festival entrance tent, Charlotte Square Gardens, Edinburgh

Edinburgh Mela

View the programme online at edinburgh-mela.co.uk

Entry to the Edinburgh Mela costs £4 for adults per day and is free for under 12s. Tickets can be purchased in advance or at the venue on the day of the event.

BOOK ONLINE: edinburgh-mela.co.uk

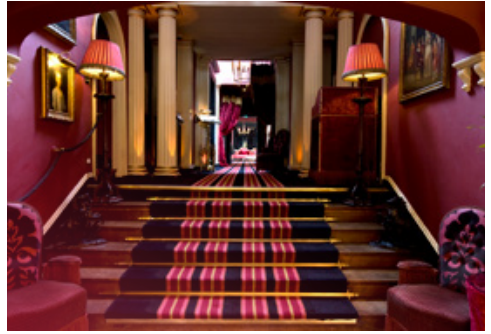
WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

Wondering what you'll need to pack? Our survival kit will help you make the most of every moment in the festival city.

- 1 Comfy shoes – Edinburgh's cobbled streets are tricky to traverse in high heels! You'll probably be doing lots of walking between venues, so bring a good pair of shoes to keep your feet dry and comfortable as you wander.
- 2 A decent sized bag – to bring the following items...
- 3 A map – while getting lost can sometimes be the best way to explore, you don't want to be late for a show! Keep your map handy and you can't go wrong. Pick up your copy of the Edinburgh Festival's venue map.
- 4 Want to use your smartphone instead? Most places in the city have good data reception, but there are some spots where coverage is patchy. Download an offline version of a map of the city to your phone in advance.
- 5 Sunglasses and suncream – if you're lucky you'll need these for long, warm afternoons in the Pleasance Courtyard, lazing in the Meadows or wandering through Princes Street Gardens.
- 6 Waterproof jacket and an umbrella – if you're not so lucky!
- 7 Plenty of loose change – always handy when you fancy an ice cream! Lothian Buses also require exact payment (currently £1.50 for a single ticket or £3.50 for a multi-use day ticket).
- 8 A camera – for snapping all the street performers and colourful characters on the Royal Mile.
- 9 A good book – to fill the gaps between shows, and provide shade should you wish to 'rest your eyes' in the Meadows on a sunny afternoon.

You don't need to bring

- 1 Wellies – it's not that kind of festival!



BOOKING ACCOMMODATION

Edinburgh offers a wealth of accommodation options for your festival stay.

Whether it's a luxury apartment on the Royal Mile, a quaint B&B in the countryside, a family-friendly hotel, some purse-friendly university accommodation, a pitch in a scenic caravan or camping park or a cosy bed in a hostel dormitory, whatever you need is sure to be on offer.

Where available, keep an eye out for VisitScotland's 1-5 star grading system, which will give you a clear indication of cleanliness, ambience, hospitality, service, accommodation standard and food. VisitScotland's booking service can also make recommendations and reservations for all its registered providers over the phone, 0845 859 1006, or online.





USEFUL CONTACTS


“Edinburgh, with its two lesser heights – the Castle and the Calton Hill – its spires and towers piercing through the smoke, and Arthur’s Seat lying crouched behind.”

Margaret Oliphant

VisitScotland

www.visitscotland.com (mobile-friendly)

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 VisitScotland

Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival

www.edinburghjazzfestival.com (mobile-friendly)

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 EdinburghJazzandBluesFestival

Edinburgh International Festival

www.eif.co.uk (mobile-friendly)

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 EdintFest

Edinburgh International Book Festival

www.edbookfest.co.uk (mobile-friendly)

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Edinburgh Art Festival

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Edinburgh Festival Fringe

tickets.edfringe.com (mobile-friendly)

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MOBILE/TABLET




Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

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Edinburgh Mela

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Edinburgh Festivals

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Edinburgh Spotlight

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The List

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from this year's Edinburgh Festivals

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