EDI
2027

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EUROPEAN SERIES
SPRING CAPITALS

# *Greetings from* EDINBURGH

*48 hours, solo, at your own pace*

POCKET EDITION · 2027

48-HOUR GUIDE · SAFETY GUIDE · PLANNING CALENDAR

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# *Welcome to Edinburgh*

Edinburgh is a city of two halves, a medieval Old Town stacked along a volcanic ridge and a Georgian New Town laid out in tidy squares below it. It is small enough to walk end to end, and dramatic enough that you will want to.

Traveling alone here is easy. Pubs have a long tradition of the quiet pint, museums are free, and the hills give you a view every time you need to get your bearings. Nobody will mind a table for one, and a chat with the person next to you is never far away.

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read through once before you go. Day One climbs the Royal Mile from the castle to Holyrood and ends in an Old Town pub. Day Two covers the New Town, the National Museum, Arthur's Seat, and Dean Village. Section 03 is the new-for-2027 guide to the two Edinburghs. The weather turns quickly, so carry a waterproof and wear shoes made for cobbles and hills.

### ESSENTIAL QUICK FACTS

**CURRENCY**
Pound sterling (£) · cards accepted nearly everywhere

**TRANSIT**
Lothian buses and trams · tap a contactless card

**TIPPING**
About 10% in restaurants if service is not included

**EMERGENCY**
999 or 112 · NHS non-emergency 111

**FREE**
National Museum, National Gallery, Arthur's Seat

**LANGUAGE**
English · Scots and Gaelic on signs

# 01 *Day One*

*The Castle · The Royal Mile · Holyrood*

The first day follows the Royal Mile downhill from the castle on its rock to the palace at the bottom, with pubs and closes along the way.

**MORNING · 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**9:00 AM**

## Edinburgh Castle

The fortress on Castle Rock has watched over the city for centuries and holds the Scottish Crown Jewels. Book a timed ticket in advance and arrive at opening.

*Allow at least two hours. The One O'Clock Gun fires daily except Sundays.*

**11:30 AM**

## The Royal Mile

The mile of cobbles between the castle and Holyrood is lined with shops, St Giles' Cathedral, and narrow alleys called closes. Duck into a few.

*Look up; many buildings rise ten stories or more.*

**1:00 PM**

## Lunch — a traditional pub

Pubs on and near the Mile serve haggis, neeps and tatties, and Scotch broth. A single seat at the bar is always welcome.

*If you eat meat, try the haggis once. Vegetarian versions are common.*

AFTERNOON · 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM

2:30 PM

### Palace of Holyroodhouse

The King's official residence in Scotland, at the foot of the Mile, with the ruined abbey beside it. Check opening times, since the palace closes for royal events.

*The audio guide is included in the ticket.*

4:30 PM

### Scottish Parliament & Holyrood Park

The modern parliament building is free to visit. Beyond it, Holyrood Park's crags and lochs begin.

*Check the visitor hours before you go.*

EVENING · 7:00 PM

7:00 PM

### Dinner in the Old Town

Grassmarket and Victoria Street have a dense cluster of restaurants and pubs under the castle walls. Pick one with a window.

*Book ahead on weekends and in August.*

*Edinburgh is built on hills and stairs. Wear shoes you can walk in all day.*

# 02 *Day Two*

*The New Town · Arthur's Seat · Dean Village*

The second day moves to the Georgian New Town, then to the hills and the river.

**MORNING · 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**9:00 AM**

## National Museum of Scotland

A huge, free museum covering Scottish history, natural science, and world cultures. Start with the Grand Gallery and the rooftop terrace.

*The rooftop view of the castle is free.*

**11:30 AM**

## Princes Street Gardens & the Scott Monument

A park in the old loch bed, under the castle. The Scott Monument can be climbed for a small fee.

*The staircase is narrow; go early.*

**1:00 PM**

## Lunch on George Street

The New Town's grand avenues hold cafés and bistros. Look for a lunch set menu.

*Lunch sets are often much cheaper than dinner.*

AFTERNOON · 2:30 PM – 6:00 PM

2:30 PM

### Scottish National Gallery

Free entry to a fine collection on the Mound, with Scottish and European masters.

*Allow an hour for the highlights.*

4:00 PM

### Arthur's Seat

A hill in Holyrood Park that rises about 250 meters above the city. The main path takes roughly 45 minutes up for a reasonably fit walker.

*Wear grippy shoes and check the weather before you climb.*

EVENING · 6:30 PM

6:30 PM

### Dean Village & the Water of Leith

A quiet old mill village in a river gorge, a few minutes from the city center. Follow the riverside path.

*It is lovely in evening light, but best in daylight.*

# 03 *Two Cities*

*Two Edinburghs in One*

**NEW FOR 2027**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

## *Did you know that Edinburgh's New Town was planned as a cure for the Old Town?*

By the 18th century the medieval Old Town, squeezed on its ridge, was overcrowded and dirty. In the 1760s the city chose a plan for a new, orderly district to the north, and the Georgian New Town was born. Today the two, together, form a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**HOW IT WORKS**

The Old Town is a tangle of closes, stairs, and tall tenements. The New Town is a grid of squares, crescents, and wide streets. Walking from one to the other takes about ten minutes and feels like changing centuries.

**HOW TO DO IT RIGHT**

Spend the morning in the Old Town while it is quiet, then cross to the New Town for the afternoon. Use the Mound or Waverley Bridge to climb between them.

**BEST TIME TO GO**

Spring and early autumn have the best balance of weather and crowds. August fills with festival visitors.

# 04 *Where to Eat*

*Edinburgh's table — pubs, bakeries and Scottish classics*

Edinburgh eats well and welcomes singles. Pubs serve full meals, cafés fill the Old Town, and the best bakeries are worth a detour.

£ under £15 · ££ £15–40 · £££ over £40 — per person, excluding drinks

**BREAKFAST & LUNCH**

## Pubs on the Royal Mile — ££

**OLD TOWN**

Haggis, soup, and pies in a traditional room.

## Grassmarket cafés — £

**OLD TOWN**

Coffee and sandwiches under the castle.

## Stockbridge cafés — ££

**STOCKBRIDGE**

A village feel with bakeries and a Sunday market.

## Leith waterfront — ££

**LEITH**

Seafood and fish and chips by the old port.

**DINNER & LATE**

## Victoria Street bistros — ££

**OLD TOWN**

Cozy spots on a curved, colorful street.

## New Town restaurants — £££

**NEW TOWN**

Classic Scottish and modern cooking.

## Whisky bars ££

OLD TOWN

Sit at the bar and ask for a tasting of three.

## Chip shops £

VARIOUS

A cheap supper of fish and chips.

# 05 Getting Around

*Getting around Edinburgh*

The center is compact and walkable, but steep. Lothian buses and trams cover the rest, and you can pay by tapping a contactless card.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Lothian buses** | about £2 | Tap a contactless card. Daily caps apply; check current fares. |
| **Edinburgh Airport** | Tram or bus | The tram runs to the city center in about 30 minutes. Check current fares. |
| **Waverley Station** | Train hub | Direct trains to Glasgow, London, and the Highlands. |
| **Taxis** | metered | Useful for late nights and hills. |
| **Walking** | free | Most sights are within 20 minutes of each other. |

Walk the Old Town and New Town, and use buses for Leith, Stockbridge, and Holyrood.

# 06 *Backup Plans*

*Edinburgh in the rain*

Scottish weather is changeable, and the city has plenty of free indoor shelter.

### National Museum of Scotland
**OLD TOWN**

Free, enormous, and warm.

### Scottish National Gallery
**THE MOUND**

Free art on the hill.

### Real Mary King's Close
**OLD TOWN**

A guided tour of preserved streets beneath the city.

### St Giles' Cathedral
**OLD TOWN**

A medieval church on the Royal Mile.

### The Writers' Museum
**OLD TOWN**

A small museum of Burns, Scott, and Stevenson.

### Whisky tasting
**OLD TOWN**

A dry place to learn about Scotch.

# 07 *Neighborhoods*

*Know your neighborhoods*

## Old Town
**MEDIEVAL**
Closes, stairs, and the castle above.

## New Town
**GEORGIAN**
Squares, crescents, and wide streets.

## Stockbridge
**VILLAGE FEEL**
Independent shops and a Sunday market.

## Leith
**HARBOR**
Old port, seafood, and bars.

## Dean Village
**QUIET**
A mill village in a gorge.

## Marchmont
**UNIVERSITY**
Cafés and park walks south of the Meadows.

# 08 *Good to Know*

*What nobody tells you*

- Edinburgh is hilly and cobbled. Wear comfortable shoes with grip.
- Carry a waterproof. The weather can change several times in a day.
- Contactless cards work almost everywhere, including buses.
- Tip about 10% in restaurants if service is not already added. Pubs do not expect tips.
- Book the castle and big attractions in advance, especially in summer.
- August is Festival season; accommodation is scarce and expensive. Book early.

**WHEN TO GO**

**Best overall** — **May–Jun**
Long days and green hills, with fewer crowds.

**Peak season** — **Jul–Aug**
The Festival and Fringe fill the city.

**Second best** — **Sep–Oct**
Golden light and thinner crowds.

**Off-season** — **Nov–Mar**
Cold and dark, with Christmas markets and Hogmanay.

# 09 Solo Traveler Safety

*Is Edinburgh safe?*

Very safe by big-city standards, with the usual awareness. Petty theft is the main concern, especially in crowds on the Royal Mile and in the festival season. Wet cobbles and steep stairs are the bigger physical hazard.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| Old Town (daytime) | ◆◆◆◆◆ |
| New Town | ◆◆◆◆◆ |
| Stockbridge & Dean Village | ◆◆◆◆◆ |
| Leith | ◆◆◆◆◇ |
| Royal Mile crowds | ◆◆◆◇◇ |
| Late-night Cowgate | ◆◆◆◇◇ |

### COMMON SCAMS

Be wary of anyone who offers to take your photo and then asks for money. Keep your phone secure in crowds. Use licensed taxis.

### HEALTH & MEDICAL

For emergencies call 999 or 112. For non-emergencies call NHS 111. Pharmacies can advise on minor problems.

### SOLO TRAVELERS

Share your plans with someone back home and keep your phone charged. Stay on lit, busy streets late at night, and take a taxi when tired.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Police, fire & ambulance** | 999 or 112 |
| **NHS non-emergency** | 111 |
| **Police non-emergency** | 101 |
| **US Embassy (London)** | +44 20 7499 9000 |

# 10 *Planning Calendar*

*Edinburgh, month by month*

A year-round look at the events that shape the city. Exact dates shift annually.

**JAN** *Burns Night*

- January 25 brings haggis, whisky, and poetry for Robert Burns.

**APR–JUN** *Spring*

- Longer days and the Edinburgh Science Festival.

**AUG** *The Festivals*

- The Fringe, the International Festival, and the Military Tattoo fill the city.

**SEP–OCT** *Autumn*

- Quieter streets and golden hills.

**NOV** *Bonfire Night*

- Fireworks and early Christmas lights.

**DEC 31** *Hogmanay*

- One of the world's biggest New Year street parties.

# *Every Stop, Mapped*

Scan the code to open the free interactive Edinburgh map — every stop in this guide, filterable by day, food, and transport.

goingsolo.life/maps/edinburgh

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