



# Scotland's capital ticks all the boxes

The Scottish capital of Edinburgh, which is located on the southern shore of the Firth of Forth, is the UK's second most popular destination for international visitors after London.

As a city break destination, it offers the opportunity to appreciate many centuries of strong and passionate Scottish heritage.

The city also offers a wealth of arts and culture, particularly during the festivals for which the city is known worldwide.

Princes Street and the Royal Mile provide the city's bustling tourist thoroughfare, particularly during one of the many annual festivals for which Edinburgh is rightly famous.

Wander just beyond, and there's the Medieval Old Town and Georgian New Town, both with UNESCO World Heritage status along with Arthur's Peak, an ancient volcano and the main peak of the hills in Edinburgh that form most of Holyrood Park.

[www.edinburgh.org](http://www.edinburgh.org)

**Ashley Gibbins**  
Commissioning Editor  
**AllWays traveller**





# Easy to understand why this city is popular

By Ashley Gibbins

**A traditional route taken by international visitors to the UK starts in London before heading to Edinburgh and then taking in Bath, Stratford-upon-Avon and/or the Cotswolds.**

There are any number of reasons why Edinburgh has enduring popularity as a tourist destination.

Unlike the sometimes overwhelming size of the UK capital, its Scottish counterpart offers all one could want from a short-break city destination, with the chance to take it all in.

Getting there is also no real problem.

The rail service from London Kings Cross gets into Edinburgh Waverly, in the heart of the city, in under four and a-half hours.

For those driving from London, as Ann and I did, Edinburgh is a straight though longer run of just under eight hours.

Stopping overnight on route breaks up the journey and, having a car, means Edinburgh can be the starting point for a grand Scottish road trip.

Once in Edinburgh, by whichever route, all one could wish for is within easy walking distance.

## The bustling hub

Top of the tourist list is likely to be a trip up to Edinburgh Castle along with a walk along Princes Street (Edinburgh's Oxford Street) and the Auld Toun (Old Town) around the Royal Mile.

This is the city's retail and entertainment hub with bars, pubs and the usual tourist paraphernalia.

## Grandeur and calm

A short stroll beyond the hive of tourist activity, and one gets to Dean Village by the Water of Leith, once an area of water mills, and now a place of gentle calm.

Or one can walk around the New Town area and appreciate the grandeur of the elegant Georgian that line the broad avenues and open squares.

## Arts and culture

As Scotland's capital it should come as no surprise that Edinburgh is rich in arts and culture.

There are any number of museums and galleries open to the public and a good chance one will find a festival taking place.

The Edinburgh International Festival and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe are well known.

But there are any number of other annual arts, music and science festivals that help state Edinburgh's claim to be the UK's festival capital.

And, of course, there is Edinburgh's wild (and often windy) Hogmanay new year celebrations.

## A proud nation

Finally, one does not visit Edinburgh without appreciating what a proud and welcoming nation the Scots are.

Proud of their place in history, their heritage and the many achievements of their scientists, designers, inventors, industrialists and literary icons.

## Nation status



The Scottish Parliament building, at the end of the Golden Mile, is where Scotland's remaining part of the UK or becoming an independent nation could well be determined in the coming years.

Free guided tours allow visitors to explore the architecture, art and history of the Scottish Parliament.

## More information

[www.edinburgh.org](http://www.edinburgh.org)  
[www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)



## A castle standing the test of time

Edinburgh Castle, which is one of the oldest fortified places in Europe, towers over Edinburgh atop the appropriately named Castle Rock.



The rock, a 'volcanic plug' formed some 350 million years ago and has been used as a fortification since the Iron Age.

A royal castle on the rock is known to have been constructed during the reign of David I in the 12th century and remained a royal residence until 1633.

As a major stronghold in the Kingdom of Scotland, the Castle saw many conflicts from the Wars of Scottish Independence in the 14th century to the Jacobite rising of 1745.

In all the castle suffered 26 sieges in its 1,100-year history and is considered 'the most besieged place in Great Britain and one of the most attacked in the world'.

In more recent times, it has been a military garrison and prison and is now the city's major visitor attraction.

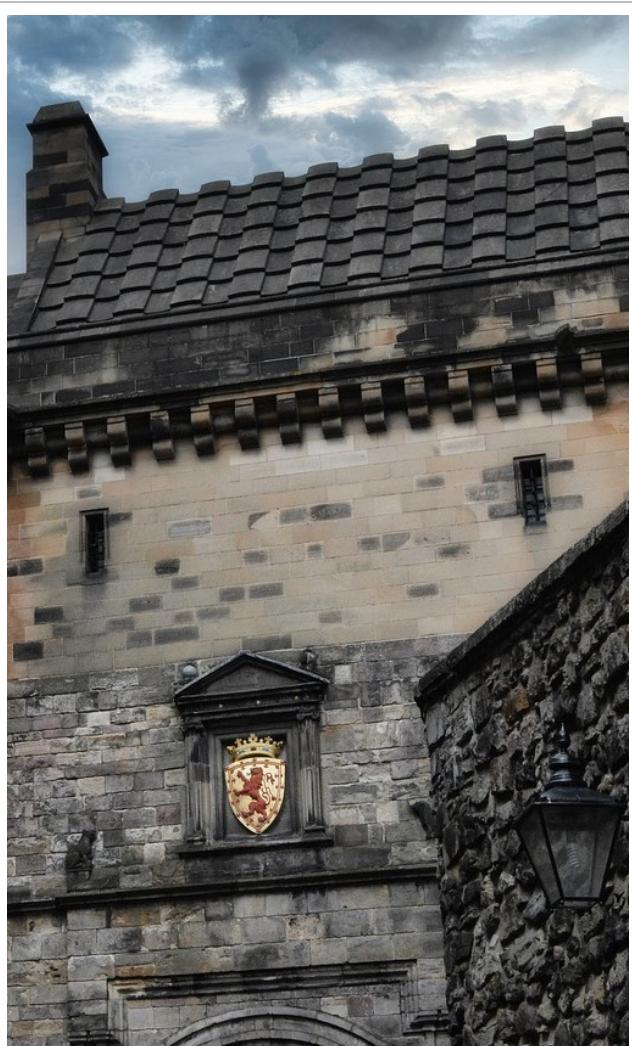
The castle is also an iconic part of Edinburgh's Old and New Towns which both enjoy UNESCO World Heritage status.

The castle also houses the Honours of Scotland, its Crown Jewels, and the Stone of Destiny, the block of red sandstone used for centuries in the coronation of the monarchs of Scotland.

The annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo by British Armed Forces and Commonwealth and international military bands takes place in August.

### More information

[www.edinburghcastle.scot](http://www.edinburghcastle.scot)  
[www.edintattoo.co.uk](http://www.edintattoo.co.uk)





## Edinburgh offers areas of stunning contrast

Visitors to the Scottish capital can enjoy hugely interesting areas, within walking distance of each other, that could not be different



St Giles Cathedral



The Real Mary King's Close

### The Old Town

Until the late 18th century Edinburgh's Old Town was, in effect, the whole of the city.

Vising today one finds the medieval street layout careful preserved with cobbled streets, narrow alleyways and hidden courtyards.

At its centre is the Royal Mile, an area of Reformation-era tenement buildings that lead from the castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse

Along the way one finds St. Giles' Cathedral, with its magnificent, vaulted ceiling and ornate tombs; the National Museum of Scotland; the Old College of the University of Edinburgh and the Scottish Parliament Building.

### The Real Mary King's Close

The area also contains a number of underground vaults and hidden passages.

The best way to appreciate these is to take the Real Mary King's Close tour.

This fascinating and very informative, one-hour social history tour with a character guide, explores a warren of hidden streets and spaces of Mary King's Close, which are buried under the Royal Mile.

The close (as in an area closed at night for security) took its name from Mary King, a merchant burgess who lived there in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The close was partially demolished and buried with the building of the Royal Exchange in the 18th century.

The Old Town provides the excitedly beating heart of the Edinburgh Festival each August (see below).

### More information

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



New Town

## Edinburgh New Town

Unlike the gradual and random growth of the Old Town, Edinburgh's New Town was a carefully planned construction project approved by the City Council in 1767.

It is the largest complete example of town planning from the Georgian era anywhere and embraces classical architecture, grand squares and terraces, gardens and secluded lanes.

Particularly stunning is Charlotte Square, designed by the architect Robert Adam in 1791, and rightly regarded as an architectural masterpiece.

The Assembly Rooms, in George Street, date from 1787, and are still used for concerts.

[www.ewh.org.uk/world-heritage-sites/newtown](http://www.ewh.org.uk/world-heritage-sites/newtown).

## Princes Gardens and Dean Village

Dean Village is just off Princes Street, but the contrast between the two areas could not be greater.

While Princes Street a bustling stretch of retail outlets and invariably crowded, and those of you who do not gain benefit from retail therapy should head across the road to the green oasis that is Palace Street Gardens.

Created in the mid-1700s as private gardens for the wealthy, it was opened to the public in 1876 and is a relaxing resource for residents and visitors alike.

Dean Village, on the Water of Leith, was where mills operated using the water flowing through.

Strolling through the village one finds mill stones and stone plaques decorated with baked bread and pies.

Well Court, the village's landmark village, was built in the 1880s and housed local workers who worked at the water mills.

Visitors can also check out the free exhibition exhibitions in the Dean Gallery and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. [www.ewh.org.uk/world-heritage-sites/deanvillage](http://www.ewh.org.uk/world-heritage-sites/deanvillage)

## Holyrood Park

With its 650 plus acres has hills, lochs, glens, ridges, cliffs and patches of gorse, Holyrood Park, about a mile from Edinburgh Castle, could be the Highlands.

On a good day, there is a walk up to Arthur's Seat, an ancient volcano, that offers great views over the city and Duddingston Loch, a freshwater loch rich in birdlife.

The park also gave us just a taste of what we could expect on our Scottish road trip.

## More information

[www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-aplace/places/holyrood-park](http://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-aplace/places/holyrood-park)



## Always something happening in 'festival' city

While Edinburgh is a year-round city destination, there is a real frisson of excitement in the city during one of its many festivals.

Of these, the Edinburgh International Festival and the Festival Fringe, in August, are globally renowned, while nowhere celebrates Hogmanay like Edinburgh.

### The Edinburgh International Festival

The Edinburgh International Festival has been presenting three weeks of opera, theatre, dance and classical music, from the world's finest performers in these genres, for over 70 years.

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

### The Edinburgh Fringe Festival

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe started in 1947, when theatre groups not invited to the

International Festival, still came to the city to stage their productions.

The Fringe of the festival name and approach continued and has grown to be the biggest arts festival in the world.

Thousands of artistes arrive to perform theatre, dance, music, cabaret and comedy and everything in between, and hundreds of thousands come to be part of it.

### Hogmanay



Edinburgh's Hogmanay, the Scottish celebration of the New Year began as an impromptu street party around the Tron Kirk in the High Street of the Old Town.

The size and popularity of the celebrations officially organised with the main street party limited to 100,000 ticket holders.

In addition to the regular 'party' celebrations there is a torchlight process, fireworks and open-air concerts by top Scottish performers.



### Other festivals

Other annual festivals that attract a more select but equally enthusiastic audiences include the :

- Science Festival (April)
- Edinburgh International Children's Festival (May), and
- Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival (July)
- the Edinburgh International Book Festival (August)
- Edinburgh Art Festival (August), and the
- Scottish International Storytelling Festival

### More information

[www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com) [www.edinburghshogmanay.com](http://www.edinburghshogmanay.com)  
[www.edinburghfestivalcity.com](http://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com)



## The Bonham, Edinburgh

By Ann Mealor

**The Bonham Hotel, situated in a secluded cobbled crescent in a leafy part of the city, is a real gem of a place in Edinburgh's stately West End.**



It comprises three Victorian townhouses overlooking peaceful Drumsheugh Gardens.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the centre, it is still within walking distance of everything a visitor would want to see including the Royal Mile, Edinburgh Castle, St Giles' Cathedral, Princes Street and Waverley Station.

There are lots of upmarket restaurants and stylish bars close by and the concierge is happy to make bookings.

A traditional boutique hotel with 49 individually styled bedrooms.

The Bonham has bags of character and buckets of charm.

Smooth stone floors, a sweeping wooden staircase, wood paneling, sumptuous wallpaper, Tiffany glass lamps and elegant chandeliers are the order of the day.

In the bar and lounge areas, the furnishings are plush, in hues of golds, blues and greys with comfortable Queen Anne chairs, large portraits, gilded clocks, bronze figurines and patterned rugs scattered across oak floors. I felt like a house guest in a luxurious, yet homely dwelling.

As we walked through the lounge to our room, a couple of friends were enjoying traditional afternoon tea.

Sipping glasses of prosecco, they looked like they had settled themselves in for the afternoon, determined to make the most of their sophisticated treat.

The fancy cakes, scones and neatly cut sandwiches on their three-tiered cake stands looked delicious.





## The room

Our room was a large, junior suite with mahogany furnishings, high ceilings, sash windows and magnificent views across the city. Hanging pride of place in the centre of the room was a magnificent crystal chandelier.

The bed was large and very comfortable and the sofa and chairs in the bay window provided the ideal place to enjoy a pre-dinner drink.

There was plenty of Brodies tea and coffee along with traditional Scottish shortbread.

A welcome gift of delicious truffles was a lovely surprise. We found complimentary water was in the fridge, along with fresh milk - all important for a good cup of tea!

Dressing gowns and slippers were in the bathroom along with luxurious, full-size bottles of Arran shampoo, body lotion and shower gel.

## Wining and dining

The Bonham dining room was elegant and chic with wood panelling, rich, purple plush chairs and large gilt framed portraits.

A la carte dining was available as well as a two or three course market menu.

The restaurant is currently open only at the weekends, so we dined each evening in the cosy, yet sophisticated, bar area - and loved it.

We enjoyed The Bonham beer battered fish and chunky chips, the steak sandwich, the vegetable burger and a selection of Scottish cheeses.

Everything was delicious. And the cocktails I had each evening, a Cosmopolitan and a Margarita, were expertly made - top notch!

I don't think I could have got better in Edinburgh! Breakfast was served in the restaurant each morning and there was a great selection of dishes to choose from.

These included kippers, smoked salmon and scrambled egg, creamy porridge and the full Scottish breakfast.

My poached eggs were perfect, but the kippers were superb.

## Excellent service

The service was excellent throughout the hotel, from the very efficient front desk team who brought extra earl grey tea to our room, to the bar staff who kept our peanut bowl topped up!

The Hotel is completely Covid compliant and has introduced a wide range of enhanced cleaning and safety measures.

All staff wear masks and there is hand gel everywhere, even individual bottles on the breakfast tables.

The Bonham Hotel provided everything we needed – and more – to make our visit to Edinburgh the best it could possibly be.

## More information

[www.bespokehotels.com/thebonham](http://www.bespokehotels.com/thebonham)  
[www.thebonham.com](http://www.thebonham.com)

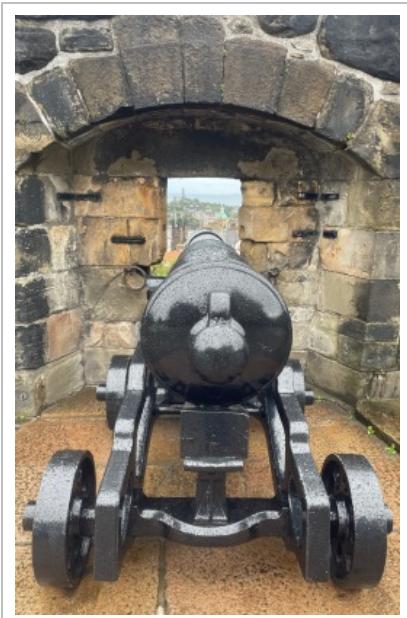
## Bespoke Hotels



The Bonham is part of the Bespoke Hotels group of boutique and luxury hotels, whose Scottish properties includes :

- Tulloch Castle, the Scottish Highlands : [www.bespokehotels.com/tullochcastlehotel](http://www.bespokehotels.com/tullochcastlehotel)
- Carnoustie Golf Hotel, Angus : [www.bespokehotels.com/carnoustiegolfhotel](http://www.bespokehotels.com/carnoustiegolfhotel)
- Stonefield Castle, Argyll : [www.bespokehotels.com/stonefieldcastle](http://www.bespokehotels.com/stonefieldcastle)

## A snapshot of Edinburgh



## In addition to this AllWays Traveller to Edinburgh, you can also enjoy reading:

### AllWays Traveller to the Scottish Borders



Edinburgh, The Scottish Borders, UK [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

**So much to discover along the Borders**

140 top attractions and destinations in the Scottish Borders, from the historic castles and abbeys to the rolling hills and mountains. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**Meandering the coastal route to Carnoustie**

Meander along the coast from the golf links to the historic town of Carnoustie. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**The Scottish Highlands and Loch Ness**

The Scottish Highlands exceeds expectation

Discover the beauty of the Scottish Highlands, from the rugged mountains to the crystal-clear lochs. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**The Scottish Borders** is that part of Scotland that abuts the border with England.

This has Dumfriesshire and Kirkcudbrightshire on the Scottish side of the border, with the English counties of Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland on the other.

The Scottish Borders region, unlike the more mountainous Highlands, is gently hilly with swathes of green fields and pastureland and the River Tweed flowing through.

The coast to one side runs along the Firth of Clyde with the North Sea on the other and Edinburgh is just over an hour's drive away.

In the central part of the Scottish Borders one finds a string of unspoilt country towns including Melrose, Selkirk and Peebles, along with many old abbeys and historic properties.

### AllWays Traveller to Carnoustie, home of golf links



Carnoustie, Scotland, UK [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

**Meandering the coastal route to Carnoustie**

Meander along the coast from the golf links to the historic town of Carnoustie. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**The small Scottish coastal town of Carnoustie is synonymous with links golf, which has been played here since the game was first devised in the 16th Century.**

Carnoustie also provides a base for visiting the historic town of St Andrews, with its thriving university and castle and cathedral ruins along with its links golf courses.

Travellers can also enjoy the fishing villages along the Fife Tourist route and the chance to walk parts of the Fife Coastal Path.

Near to Carnoustie is Glamis Castle, the 'ancestral seat' of the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne since 1372.

The castle provided the inspiration for Shakespeare's Macbeth and was the childhood home of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and birthplace of the current Queen's sister, Princess Margaret.

### AllWays Traveller to the Scottish Highlands and Loch Ness



The Scottish Highlands and Loch Ness, Scotland, UK [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

**The Scottish Highlands exceeds expectation**

Discover the beauty of the Scottish Highlands, from the rugged mountains to the crystal-clear lochs. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**The Scottish Highlands** is undoubtedly one of the grand scenic regions of Europe.

It offers majestic mountains, with Ben Nevis Britain's highest, and a stunning North Sea coastline scattered with remote fishing villages.

Loch Ness, in the centre of the region, is the UK's largest lake and one enmeshed in the myth of the monster, and it is here one finds the ruins of the once mighty Urquhart Castle.

The Highlands also embraces the Cairngorms National Park and Dunrobin Castle, the stately family seat of the Earl of Sutherland.

A fine way to experience the majesty of the Highlands, which covers an area of some 10,000 square miles, is on a road trip that takes in all or part of the North Coast 500.

### AllWays Traveller to the Cairngorms



The Cairngorms, Scotland, UK [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

**Nature, conservation and culture in the Cairngorms**

The Cairngorms is a mountain range in the eastern Highlands of Scotland, dominated by Cairn Gorm. This issue also includes a guide to the best of the region's food and drink, including the famous Scotch Whisky, and a look at the area's rich history and culture.

**The Cairngorms** are a mountain range in the eastern Highlands of Scotland dominated by Cairn Gorm.

Much of the area is embraced within the Cairngorms National Park, the largest of the UK network of national parks.

It offers landscapes that range from the high windswept mountains and heather moorlands and peatlands to forests, wetlands and rivers.

Having Scotland's most natural habitats, the Cairngorms is home to some 25% of the UK's rare and endangered species.

It is also seeing some of the UK's most ambitious conservation projects.

The Cairngorms also play host to many of Scotland's Highland Games during the spring and summer.

Read more at [www.allwaystraveller.com](http://www.allwaystraveller.com)

## AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



**AllWays traveller** is the consumer travel magazine from the International Travel Writers, providing independent travellers with views of the world from Alliance travel journalists.

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

**The International Travel Writers Alliance** is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

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



**Ann Mealor** is a professional travel writer and photographer and Managing Editor of AllWays Traveller



**Ashley Gibbins** is a professional travel writer and photographer and Managing Director of the International Travel Writers Alliance.