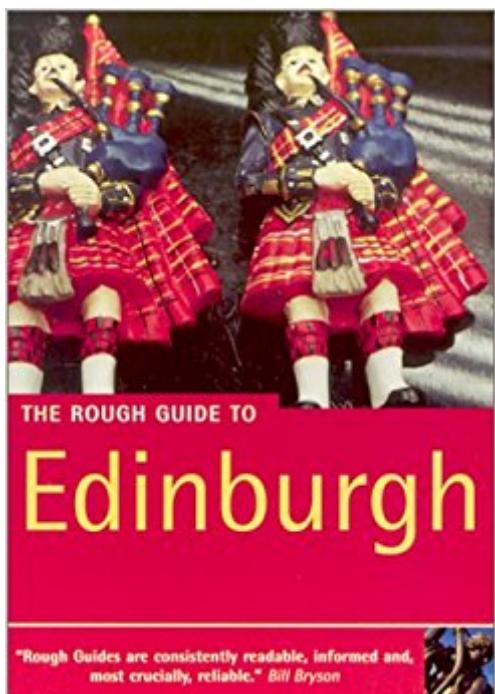


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The Rough Guide To Edinburgh (3rd Edition)



Synopsis

"The Rough Guide to Edinburgh" is the definitive pocket handbook to Scotland's absorbing capital, featuring: informed accounts of all the city's historic buildings, galleries and attractions, from the ancient Castle to the new National Museum of Scotland; insider's tips on the best places to stay, drink and eat, for all budgets; the pick of the day-trips, including Glasgow, Stirling and St. Andrews, as well as Highland walks and sandy beaches; and full-colour maps with grid references for every attraction and recommendation.

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Customer Reviews

Donald Reid is the co-author of The Rough Guides to Scotland, Scottish Highlands & Islands and South Africa. He is also editor of The List's Eating & Drinking Guide for Edinburgh and Glasgow.

WHERE TO GO The city of Edinburgh spreads over a wide area: suburbs reach north to the shore of the Firth of Forth and south to the hills of Midlothian, and merge into the satellite towns of fertile East Lothian and industrialized West Lothian to the east and west. However, one of the capital's great attractions is that most of the main sights are concentrated in its historic core, and are easily explored on foot; though you do have to be prepared for some punishing inclines and steep flights of stairs. Right in the heart of the city, it is undeniably Edinburgh Castle atop its crag which draws the eye. Still a working castle with a garrison of soldiers and a signal gun fired daily at 1pm, it's a pricey outing; but worth it for the chance to explore the

battlements, mug-up on some of the more important moments in Scottish history, and take in some spectacular vistas over the city and its hinterland. Running west to east from the Castle through the heart of the medieval Old Town is Scotland's most famous street, the Royal Mile, with its string of impressive and important buildings; however, it's just as rewarding to explore some of the numerous cobbled wynds (narrow lanes) and tightly packed closes which run off the main street. The Royal Mile ends at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, still the monarch's Scottish residence; opposite, and in dramatic contrast, is the new Scottish Parliament, the city's most important contemporary building. Providing a stunning backdrop to both, and offering a tantalizing sample of Scotland's wild scenic beauty, is Holyrood Park, an extensive area of open countryside in the very heart of the city that's dominated by the distinctive profile of Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh's highest point. It's worth heading south of the Royal Mile to see some impressive individual buildings. These include the Old College of the University, a late masterpiece of Robert Adam, and the spectacular new National Museum of Scotland, a fusion of vernacular and modern styles in honey-coloured sandstone, which contains a wonderfully diverse and well laid-out collection of the nation's treasures, from hordes of Roman silver to items donated by local-boy-made-good Sir Sean Connery. North of the Royal Mile, across Princes Street Gardens, lies the New Town. Its main thoroughfare, Princes Street, is dominated by high-street shops but also offers wonderful views of the Old Town skyline, while unexpected vistas of the Firth of Forth open out from the elevated streets to the north. There are many magnificent Neoclassical set pieces here, notably William Henry Playfair's National Gallery of Scotland, with its impressive collection of Old Masters and French Impressionist masterpieces; Adam's Charlotte Square; and the various Grecian edifices atop Calton Hill. A little beyond the New Town's graceful crescents lie the beautifully laid-out grounds of the Botanic Garden, and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, the city's most engaging gallery and Britain's oldest specialist collection of twentieth-century painting and sculpture. Out from the centre, the seedy edge of Leith, Edinburgh's medieval port, is softened by a series of great bars, upmarket seafood restaurants and dockland developments, one of which provides a berth for the former royal yacht Britannia, a popular attraction for fans of the Royals and Britain's naval heritage. For open outlooks and a breath of fresh air, head on to the old fishing harbour of Newhaven or the trim village of Cramond, both on the Firth of Forth coast. Many points of interest in Edinburgh's southern suburbs are linked to the series of hills which rise here, notably Craigmillar Castle, a residence used by Mary, Queen of Scots; and the Pentlands, an easily accessible stretch of hills and moorland much appreciated by hikers and mountain bikers.

Edinburgh is well-placed for day-trips to other parts of central Scotland. Glasgow, Scotland's largest city and home to some stunning art and architecture, is only an hour's travel to the west, while historic Stirling, with its superb castle and proximity to the Highlands, is a similar distance to the northwest. St Andrews, ancient home of the game of golf, takes only a little longer to reach, while anyone keen on Scotland's history would do well to spend a bit of time exploring some spots closer to Edinburgh, including Linlithgow, with its soaring, roofless palace, and East Lothian, where ruins such as Tantallon Castle are among the country's most dramatic. If you've a car, a trip south into the Border region of rolling hills and ruined abbeys offers a taste of an appealing but relatively little-known stretch of open countryside.

WHEN TO VISIT

Edinburgh's climate is typically British: clear seasonal divisions ranging from snow in winter to scorching sun in summer, frequently changing weather conditions at any time of year and, overall, just a little bit too much rain for anyone's liking. However, Edinburgh's east-coast position ensures that the city suffers less rainfall than western parts of the country, though it is prone to blustery and often bitter winds blowing in off the North Sea. Another local phenomenon is the haar or sea mist, which is wont to roll in from the Firth of Forth and envelop the city after a few warm days in summer. The coldest months are January and February, when the highest daily temperature averages at 6°C (42°F) and overnight frosts are common. July is the warmest month, reaching an average high of 18°C (65°F), although late spring (May) and early autumn (September) are often good times to visit for welcome spells of bright weather and less of the tourist scrum which marks the Royal Mile! in high season. With the Festival in full swing, August is a great time to visit Edinburgh; but be prepared for large crowds, scarce accommodation and busy restaurants.

Even though you won't find pictures inside this little book, that problem can be easily solved bringing a camera to your trip to Edinburgh, and/or buying some postcards. Inside this guide you will find a lot of useful information (anything you could need to know). The maps are very clear; it gives you some good advises about when to go to the Scottish Capital; and the prices you will find here are essential (specially if you want to find cheaper places to sleep). I enjoyed my stay there, and without any doubts I would like to visit this beautiful city again. You will be impressed with your first sight of the Edinburgh Castle, and believe me, you would like to read this guide from the start until the end.

We just got back from our visit to Edinburgh today. We had such a great time and this book went everywhere with us. I referred to it often. And the maps in the back of the book were really good, too.

We used this little book all the time on our trip to Edinburgh. We had a great trip, it sure is a beautiful city and nice people too. We found the restaurants and hotels recommended were good. We would recommend this book to anyone going to Edinburgh. We hope to go back for the festival one day.

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