



Guardians of the Flame

Edinburgh Activities

(Editorial note: Well, it's nae Blackpool but it ain't too shabby!)

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Tours

1. Waking Tour of Edinburgh



What is It? This is an Edinburgh city tour like you have never seen before.

Why go? Not only will you see Edinburgh, but you will be supporting a fantastic organisation where your experienced tour guides, all of whom have been affected by homelessness, simply live and breathe the city, and

offer their own personal insight into Edinburgh's past, present and future.

2. Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Edinburgh



Are you ready to explore the magnificent Scottish capital? See as much as possible and hop on to a multi-lingual commentary bus tour. Start your journey on Waterloo Place and prepare yourself for an adventurous journey all around the heart of Edinburgh. We'll take you to many great locations, all of which give Edinburgh its character and heritage. Buy your ticket [online](#)

3. Sink a wee dram of whisky



What is it? Wet your whistle with a helping of Scotland's famous spirit.

Why go? Edinburgh is famous for a few things and whisky is most certainly one of them. It comes as no surprise that there are several ways to wet your whisky whistle in Edinburgh and beyond (try saying that after a few drams). If you're after a tippie, head out on one of the city's guided walks where you'll visit

Edinburgh's best whisky venues for a belter of a tasting laced with folklore and Scottish storytelling. You'll know your mashing from your malting in no time.

Sightseeing

1. Edinburgh Castle



What is it? Perhaps the Scottish capital's most iconic building.

Why go? It's one of the UK's most iconic tourist attractions and Edinburgh Castle is worthy of the attention. Sitting atop one of the city's extinct volcanoes, it's a grandiose and constantly visible reminder of the settlement's historic roots.

The castle has many actor-led historical events – those old stone walls really come to life when

they're hosting an audience with Mary, Queen of Scots

Don't miss: If you get peckish, there's a traditional tea room where you can munch on homemade scones with strawberry jam and a satisfying dollop of clotted cream. Winner.

2. Experience The Balmoral



What is it? More than just a hotel, this is one of the city's most famous buildings.

Why go? If you arrive in Edinburgh via the Waverley train station, the first sight you're likely to see is the imposing bulk of the Balmoral Hotel. Topped with a clock that allegedly runs a few minutes early to help commuters catch their trains, it's an old-school hotel that follows in the grandest of traditions

Don't miss: Its Michelin-starred restaurant Number One – led by head chef Mathew Sherry.

3. Her Majesty's Yacht Britannia



What is it. The former royal yacht of the British monarchy. She was in their service from 1954 until 1997. During her 43-year career, the yacht travelled more than a million nautical miles around the world to more than 600 ports in 135 countries. Now retired from service, Britannia is permanently berthed in Edinburgh.

Why go? Why wouldn't you want to walk in the footsteps of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The Royal Family used Britannia for multiple purposes, including as their palace at sea. Whilst abroad, the Royal Family were able to entertain foreign dignitaries aboard this iconic ship. It was said that an invitation to attend an event on Britannia was simply too tempting to resist, allowing for trade missions to bring in millions of pounds in deals for the United Kingdom, or so goes the justification for using my taxes to fund it.

Don't miss. Time for tea: A visit to the Royal Deck Tea Room serving delicious scones and cakes, as well as warming soup and sandwiches are served in the Tea Room every day! What could be more British than a scone and a cup of freshly brewed tea sitting aboard HM The Queen's former Royal Yacht?

Editorial Note: The tea must be in a bone china cup or you will forever be labelled a heathen. Should you pour the milk in first before pouring the tea, instant deportation awaits. Unlike the scone debate (jam or cream first), which is a regional preference, the milk first question is a matter of class and milk first is a major social faux pas.

Walking

1. Climb Arthur's Seat



What is it? An extinct volcano with a peak that sits 251 metres above sea level, offering some sweet views of the city.

Why go? How many cities can boast that they have an extinct volcano? Well, Edinburgh is one of them. Arthur's Seat is visible from much of the centre since it rises out of the wide grasslands of Holyrood Park. It makes for a (relatively) easy voyage and at the highest point you'll discover matchless views of the city skyline.

Arthur's Seat can be tackled from various directions, the easiest being the grassy slope on the east side rising from Dunsapie Loch on Queen's Drive.

2. Stroll through The Meadows



What is it? A grassy, wide-open space for joggers, sports teams and sunbathers in the centre of town.

Why go? The large, leafy expanse of the Meadows lies in the shadow of Edinburgh University's central campus. A relaxing, airy alternative to the rushing traffic and labyrinthine alleyways of the Old Town, the Meadows also connects the city centre with the calmer suburbs of the Southside, home to many a deli, café and boutique.

Try out the excellent [27](#) Elliott's café, plant-based doughnut delights from [Considerit Chocolate](#), ethical grocery shop [The Refillery](#) and [Tills](#), one of Edinburgh's oldest second-hand bookshops.

3. Wander through the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



What is it? A publicly accessible garden on the edge of the New Town, containing trees, plants and flowers from across the world.

Why go? A peaceful spot away from the bustle of the city, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a popular destination for various reasons. There are more than 13,000 living specimens across the garden itself, set in over 70 acres of beautiful landscape, with panoramic views across the city. What's more, the Terrace Café and Gateway

Restaurant are both well worth a visit if you're stopping for a bite or a drink.

Don't miss: Inverleith House Gallery is a very highly regarded contemporary art gallery, and the former site of the city's Gallery of Modern Art.

4. See stunning views from Calton Hill



What is it? Enjoy panoramic views over the Edinburgh skyline from Calton Hill, home to a collection of striking Greek-style historic monuments, as well as the Collective contemporary art gallery.

Why go? Take a short stroll up Calton Hill and you'll be rewarded with views across some of the city's major sites, including Arthur's Seat, Holyrood Palace, the Parliament and the

Royal Mile. You can also spend time exploring the Acropolis, with the Parthenon-

inspired National Monument, the Nelson Monument and the City Observatory all taking up residence on the hill.

5. Wander down the Water of Leith



What is it? The main river flowing through the city, which winds down into Leith and into the Firth of Forth.

Why go? It's just darn pretty. For those who fancy a full day trip, the Water of Leith Walkway is a long, 13-mile route passing through Colinton village and the Union Canal. But if you'd rather stick closer to town, we'd recommend the section from the Scottish Gallery of Modern Art, up past the trendy neighbourhood of Stockbridge and winding up at the Royal Botanic Garden.

There's something quite

magical about the foliage and the way the light hits the water.

Don't miss: The highly Instagrammable Dean Village, a gorgeous oasis by the water with old buildings and stone plaques. And to make it even better, it's only five minutes away from Princes Street in the town centre.

Shopping

1. Fill up your bags on Victoria Street



What is it? The winding Victoria Street swoops from George IV Bridge down to the historic Grassmarket, and is home to Edinburgh's finest selection of independent boutiques.

Why go? If you're ready to drop some pennies, you can discover contemporary fashion items in [Swish](#) and more formal, tweed-based couture in [Walker Slater](#); designer homeware in [The Red Door Gallery](#) and Harry

Potter paraphernalia at [Museum Context](#). Not to mention the extensive range of foodie delights on offer, from the distinctive scent of cheesemonger [I.J. Mellis](#) to the hog roast at [Oink](#) and the array of flasks and bottles in the windows of [The Whisky Shop](#).

The Arts

1. Catch a film at Cameo



What is it? A century-old cinema playing a solid mix of independent and foreign releases alongside selected mainstream blockbusters and special events.

Why go? Apparently one of Quentin Tarantino's favourite picture houses, the Cameo cinema has been operating under one name or another for more than 100 years. Recently refurbished with

some of the comfiest cinema seats in town, it's the ideal place to catch a well-curated season (usually focused on a specific director's work) or special cinematic event.

Don't miss: Even if you don't fancy watching a film, the venue's bar is an easygoing place to sip a pint and eavesdrop on some serious cinephile chatter.

2. A Chorus Line at the Festival Theatre



New York City. 1975. On an empty Broadway stage, seventeen performers are put through their paces in the final, gruelling audition for a new Broadway musical. Only eight will make the cut.

A Chorus Line is a musical that revolutionised Broadway, with creator Michael Bennett using real-life testimonies from late-night

recording sessions with dancers. Celebrate the lives of theatre's unsung heroes, as they tell searing stories of ambition, shattered hopes, and what it costs to follow your dreams.

3. Laugh yourself silly at The Stand



What is it?

Pioneering comedy venue that also serves up local lager.

Why go? Rightly considered the leading light of the Scottish comedy scene, The Stand is just as likely to feature old hands like Dylan Moran practising new material as it is new talent treading the comedic boards for the first time. A popular venue and you can visit

for the [Friday Show](#) or the [Saturday Show](#).

4. Get cultured at Summerhall



What is it? A

hub of the city's arts scene, hosting performances of all shapes and sizes.

Why go? Art

exhibitions, theatre performances, gigs, clubs, films, talks, workshops – there's very little you can't do at Summerhall, the multi-arts venue housed in a former veterinary school just off the Meadows.

Don't miss: The

place even has its

own microbrewery, churning out the tasty and refreshing Barney's Beer, which you can sip while enjoying a meal in the wood-panelled bar out back. Or take a tour of Summerhall Distillery, where the lush Pickering's Gin is made

5. Serena Terry: All Tied Up - 27th September



After the incredible success of her first stand up UK and Ireland tour, Serena Terry is going back on the road in 2024.

With a brand new show and even bigger venues, Serena will take audiences through the trials and tribulations of being a working mum, how she's coping with a new career, mental health, marriage and perimenopause.

[Book Here](#)

6. Go masterpiece-spotting at Scottish National Galleries



What is it? The home of Edinburgh's grandest collections of both classical and contemporary art.

Why go? Whatever your artistic preference, there's a Scottish National Gallery to suit you. The Greek-columned National Galleries complex is located right in the heart of the city, at the foot of the Mound on Princes Street; the red sandstone Portrait Gallery is nestled

five minutes away in the New Town; and both Modern Art One and Two occupy the grassy area above the picturesque Dean Village to the west.

Food and Drink

1. Eat a Michelin-starred meal at Restaurant Martin Wishart



How long to get there? 17-minute taxi from hotel

What is it? A Michelin-starred marvel in Leith.

Why go? Martin Wishart opened his flagship venue in Leith back in 1999 and was still well ahead of the curve when he gained his Michelin star just two years later. Back then, the Shore area was finding its feet and just as the area has continued to boom, Wishart's restaurant has lost none of its

appeal. On a

weekday, you might catch some local business folk chewing the fat, but this is largely the domain of locals and visitors to the city keen to splash the cash in one of its finest restaurants. This is elegant, decadent dining at its best, with Scottish ingredients laying the foundation for both traditional and modern French cuisine.

Don't miss: The lunch, à la carte and various tasting menus are always available. The matched wine package is a necessary, if costly delight.

2. Chill out at Paradise Palms



How long to get there? 9-minute walk from hotel

What is it? Meat-free restaurant, bar and community space with its own on-site record store.

Why go? Paradise Palms is the perfect place to start a night out, thanks to its always-bustling bar, eclectic cocktail menu and quirky interior decor. It's more than just a fun place to drink, though; it's

also a welcoming LGBTQ+ friendly venue that regularly plays host to DJs, drag queens, poets and musicians. If you're hungry, try the American diner-inspired veggie and vegan food by Lucky Pig – the buffalo cauliflower and dirty fries come highly recommended.

Don't miss: There are so many drinks worth ordering on the Paradise Palms menu, but for something properly different, try the Buckfast Daiquiri, which is exactly what it sounds like: Havana Club 3yo Rum, Buckfast, fresh lime and sugar. Delish.

3. Makars Gourmet Mash Bar



How long to get there? 8-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? After years of travel and seeing food packed with nonsensical ingredients, the owner couldn't understand why classic Scottish dishes were not recognised on the world stage. More worryingly, it seemed that the deep-fried Mars bar was the most famous contemporary dish (for all the wrong reasons)!

The Makars Mash Bar says NO to deep fat fryers, artificial this and that, and YES to delicious healthy, locally produced food like his granny used to cook and she was one hell of a cook !

If you've never been to a Mash Bar before, it's not exactly a bar or a restaurant, but a combination of the two with a bit of a homemade feel.

4. The Devil's Advocate



How long to get there? 8-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? Situated in an old Victorian pump house hidden away up Advocate's Close. Featuring a mezzanine dining area and a 300-strong whisk(e)y shelf, our food menu boasts seasonal and Scottish ingredients that change monthly.

5. Bertie's Proper Fish and Chips



How long to get there? 4-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? There is nothing quite as British as Fish and Chips.

Bertie's serve their speciality Proper Fish and Chips as well as contemporary twists on the traditional chip shop experience.

Be a true Brit and treat yourself to the tradition that is a "Friday night Chippy Tea"

6. Vittoria on the Bridge



How long to get there? 7-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? Situated on George IV Bridge, in the heart of the Old Town, Vittoria on the Bridge has been serving up, authentic Italian cuisine since it opened its doors in 2007.

Vittoria's is open daily, a perfect place for a quick bite of lunch or pre-theatre supper. During the day, the atmosphere is just right to meet up with friends for coffee or watch the world go by. Then, later on, as the working day ends, the mood becomes more vibrant as they swing into full operation for dinner.

7. Howies Victoria



How long to get there? 7-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? Howies Victoria is located on one of the most photographed streets in Europe. A historic building, paired-back stone walls, wooden floors and eclectic art make it the perfect spot for an evening of informal dining.

Look forward to fresh, seasonal, Scottish food and delicious wines and whisky in an informal setting, served with a smile.

8. Dishoom



How long to get there? 17-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? Begin your day at Dishoom with breakfast, which might be a Bacon Naan Roll, a Kejriwal or a Big Bombay. Then lunch lightly on Roomali Rolls and Salad Plates, or linger with a feast. Refresh your afternoon with a drop of Chai and a small plate or two. Dine early or dine late. Or just join us for a tippie – perhaps an India Gimlet, a Permit Room Old-fashioned, or our very good Dishoom IPA

9. Oink



How long to get there? 4-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? As 4th generation farmers, they are passionate about good food. They are proud to bring their succulent pulled pork to Oink's three shops in Edinburgh.

Depending on your appetite you can go for the Piglet (80g), The Oink (160g) or the Grunter (250g)!

10. The Mussel and Steak Bar



How long to get there? 2-minute walk from the hotel

What is it? The Mussel & Steak Bar, nestled in Edinburgh's Old Town Grassmarket, is the perfect location for a restaurant serving locally sourced market produce.

Opened in 2005 by restaurateur Marshall Milne, this independent restaurant has been a firm favourite of visitors and Scots alike for over 18 years. Inspired by Marshall's love of fresh food and Scotland, this unique eatery is popular and bustling all year round.