

Wellbeing
**TRAVEL
GUIDE**

Edinburgh

From the winding, cobblestone alleys of Old Town to the majestic Georgian architecture of New Town, Scotland's capital is a treasure trove of rich history, culture and fantastic food. Emma Winterschladen shares some of the best bits of her beloved university city.



The Witchery by the Castle

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If you're after a truly romantic city break, drenched in luxury and history, then you can do no better than this time-capsule hotel. Tucked down a cobbled close off the Royal Mile, near Edinburgh Castle, it is an eccentrically Scottish hideaway. In its adult-only suites, you'll find lavish antique décor, four-poster beds, roll-top baths for two and champagne on ice upon arrival, as well as all the mod cons you could wish for. Its restaurant also has a world-class reputation, serving exquisite Scottish fare in a candlelit, oak-panelled setting. thewitchery.com

to stay



Picardy Place

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Just a short walk from Princes Street, this stylish Georgian townhouse is an oasis of calm and comfort in the heart of the city. Its interior is both elegant and homely, with spacious, high-ceilinged bedrooms, open fires, sumptuous soft furnishings and grand stone-clad bathrooms. The hotel also boasts a German beer hall-inspired bar, The Bier Keller, and the superb Steak Restaurant (which serves the most delicious melt-in-mouth Chateaubriand). picardyplace.co.uk

TO DRINK

Bramble Bar

Enjoy some one-on-one time with your favourite person in this wonderful candlelit cocktail bar, located in a basement on Queen Street. Beware: with over 40 gins and an elaborate cocktail list full of interesting ingredients, it may be hard to leave! If you want somewhere to start, my favourite is the Stepford Sister. bramblebar.co.uk



27 ELLIOTT'S

to eat

Broughton Deli

A local favourite, this is the perfect spot for a wholesome, laid-back lunch. It's always buzzing with conversation and the food is freshly prepared and organic. Make sure you try the deli ramen noodle soup – it's a winner. broughton-deli.co.uk



27 Elliott's

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This addition to Edinburgh's eating scene, in The Meadows, has quickly become a firm neighbourhood favourite. Jessica Elliott Dennison, author of cookbook *Salad Feasts*, has done an amazing job of creating a cosy-yet-cool café that serves fresh pasta, vibrant salads and homemade cakes (and the rest!). Keep an eye out for her seasonal supper clubs, too – a wonderful way to spend an evening. 27elliotts.com

TO GO

Dean Village

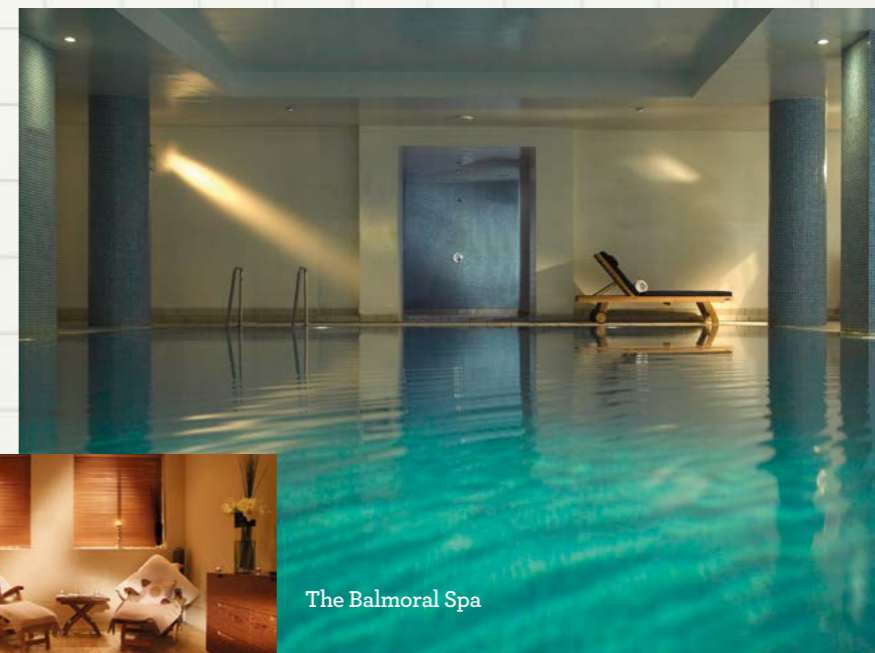
To the west of the city sits this picturesque pocket of history by the Water of Leith. Once a hub of industrial activity, today it's a quiet, sought-after residential area with charming Victorian houses. It makes for a lovely winter's walk – head to the bottom of Hawthornbank Lane for the perfect photo opportunity.

'This is a city of shifting light, of changing skies, of sudden vistas. A city so beautiful it breaks the heart again and again.'

Alexander McCall Smith

Balmoral Spa

The next best thing to staying at Edinburgh's most distinguished address, is paying its luxurious spa a visit. With a Finnish spa, Turkish steam room, pool and treatments, it's a real haven. For a winter warmer, try the Rocco Forte Facial Ritual (which includes a back and foot massage) or Rose Indulgence Wrap. Or why not book in for a spa day package for the ultimate pampering treat, which includes treatments, a two-course lunch and full access to the spa. roccofortehotels.com



The Balmoral Spa



to do

Walk up Arthur's Seat

A brisk walk to the top of this famous craggy peak is just the way to blow away the cobwebs – whatever the weather. An extinct ancient volcano set in Holyrood Park, it offers breathtaking 360° views across the city. If you want to make an afternoon of it, head back down the hill and walk for 20 minutes to Duddingston village, where you'll find the Sheep Heid Inn, understood to be Scotland's oldest surviving public house (it's around 600 years old). A cosy spot for a pub lunch and game of skittles.



Climb Arthur's Seat for spectacular views

Photograph: Clauzel Rheault

to drink

Artisan Roast

This Edinburgh-born coffee roastery has garnered a cult following among locals. There was nothing I loved more than to while away an afternoon in the snug Broughton Street café with a good book. But if you're visiting and shorter on time, then pop in for a cup of delicious Java and a homemade bake to fuel a day of exploring. Artisan Roast also now has cafés in the city's Stockbridge and Bruntsfield neighbourhoods, as well as one in Glasgow. artisanroast.co.uk



FOR SUPPER

The Outsider

With its daily changing, hand-scrawled specials menu and happy chatter floating through the air, this word-of-mouth favourite is always full – from day to evening – for a reason. Its creative dishes, impressive wine list and reasonable prices make it an ideal spot for an informal supper. And although it's got one of those 'I-want-everything' menus, it's the steamed mussels with cream, bacon, pine nuts,

Parmesan, fresh basil and fries that I always go back to. Added bonus if you can bag yourself the window table overlooking the castle!

theoutsiderrestaurant.com

Timber Yard

The epitome of industrial-chic, this old brick warehouse is now home to one of Edinburgh's finest eating establishments. The award-winning, family-run restaurant offers lunch, pre-theatre, four-, six- and eight-course menus – with ingredient-led dishes such as trout, fennel, samphire and buttermilk; or venison, elderberry, chanterelle and tarragon. The on-site growing patch provides herbs and flowers, while everything else is sourced locally from growers, producers and foragers. It also has a drinks list to rival the food – with intriguing cocktails and natural wines from small European wineries. The wood-burning stove makes it a special spot for a cold evening.

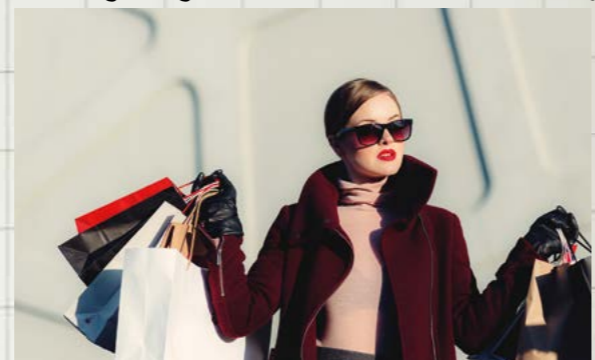
timberyard.co



to shop

W. Armstrong & Son

A trip to Edinburgh wouldn't be complete without a rummage through one of this beloved institution's three stores. Since opening the Grassmarket flagship branch in 1840, Armstrong's has been dressing the city's inhabitants in vintage garments. The shops truly are an Aladdin's cave of unique things – from one-of-a-kind vintage wear to timeless designer cashmere jumpers. There's something for all tastes and ages. armstrongsvintage.co.uk



Broughton Street

Just off the tourist radar, on the eastern fringes of New Town is a very special cobbled street. Lined with a vibrant array of independent shops, cafés and bars, it's worth putting aside a few hours for a leisurely amble. Make sure you pop into the following shops: Curiouser and Curiouser for Scottish-inspired gifts, stationery and art; Life Story for Scandi-style homewares and jewellery; Crombies of Edinburgh for deli treats; and Villeneuve Wines for a bottle of fine wine or whisky.

FOR BRUNCH

Gardener's Cottage

Built in 1836 and set in the Royal Terrace Gardens, this quaint cottage is now a critically-acclaimed restaurant. Serving the best of seasonal Scottish cuisine in a friendly, informal setting, communal tables add to an intimate, supper-club feel. Just make sure you book ahead, as it's becoming an increasingly popular brunch spot among Edinburgh urbanites (it also serves à la carte lunches and a seven-course dinner menu). The beetroot bloody

Mary is a must, as is the Arbroath kipper and poached eggs, and bread which is baked in the restaurant's equally-lovely sister café in Leith, Quay Commons. As the restaurant is at the foot of Calton Hill, it's worth a stroll up to the top for views across Edinburgh and to see the impressive, if unfinished, National Monument of Scotland.

thegardenerscottage.co



Stockbridge

There is a village feel to this charming corner of Edinburgh. You'll find bakeries such as Cuckoo's and Söderberg, as well as high-quality charity shops. One of Edinburgh's most photogenic streets, Circus Lane – with its quaint mews and olde worlde feel – is also here. As is Stockbridge Restaurant – the place to go for fine dining.

A notable mention must also go to Stockbridge Market. stockbridgemarket.com



to see



Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

Edinburgh isn't short on national art galleries, but my personal favourite has to be its most contemporary offering. Situated in two stately piles, which face each other in a manicured sculpture park to the west of the city centre, it's home to work by the likes of Matisse, Bacon, Picasso, Hockney, Warhol and Hirst, among others. Whether you're a buff or not, a walk around won't fail to please – and the library, gift shop and cafés are an added bonus. Admission is free, unless there's a special exhibition on. nationalgalleries.org

Photographs: Peiheng Yang, Florencia Viadana

GETTING AROUND

Edinburgh is very walkable and best enjoyed on foot if you can. There are, however, lots of buses to help you get around, as well as a tram with direct links to the airport.

GETTING THERE

Edinburgh Waverley train station is situated in the heart of the city, and a train from London King's Cross is just four hours up the scenic east coast with LNER (prices start from £26.50 one way if you book early). You can also fly direct to Edinburgh Airport from many UK airports (although it's not as eco-friendly as the train).



ONE MORE THING...

Remember to bring a warm coat, hat, gloves and brolly. If you're lucky you'll be spoiled with one of Edinburgh's glorious bright, crisp winter days, but just as likely is rain, wind and grey skies.