

Edinburgh



Edinburgh is a city that just begs to be explored. From the vaults and wynds that riddle the Old Town to the picturesque urban villages of Stockbridge and Cramond, it's filled with quirky, come-hither nooks that tempt you to walk just that little bit further. And every corner turned reveals sudden views and unexpected vistas – green sunlit hills, a glimpse of rust-red crags, a blue flash of distant sea. It's a place to put the guidebook away for a bit, and just wander.

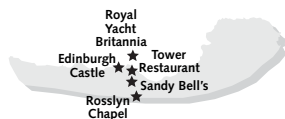
Not only is Edinburgh one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, it also enjoys one of Europe's most beautiful settings. It's a town entangled in its landscape, where the rocky battlements of Salisbury Crags overlook one end of the Old Town and the leafy corridor of the Water of Leith snakes along only yards from the elegant Georgian terraces of the New Town. Fingers of greenery insinuate themselves among streets and suburbs everywhere, and you can walk or cycle across the city from the Firth of Forth to the Pentland Hills almost without touching a tarmac road.

But there's more to Edinburgh than just sightseeing – there are top shops, world-class restaurants and a bacchanalia of bars to enjoy. This is a city of pub crawls and impromptu music sessions, mad-for-it clubbing and all-night parties, overindulgence, late nights and wandering home through cobbled streets at dawn.

All these superlatives come together in August at festival time, when it seems as if half the world descends on Edinburgh for one enormous party. If you can possibly manage it, join them.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Taking in the views from the battlements of **Edinburgh Castle** (p80)
- Feasting on steak and oysters at the **Tower Restaurant** (p104) as the sun sets over the city
- Nosing around the Queen's private quarters on the former **Royal Yacht Britannia** (p90) at Leith
- Listening to live folk music at **Sandy Bell's** (p109)
- Trying to decipher the Da Vinci Code at mysterious **Rosslyn Chapel** (p115)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 0131

■ POPULATION: 430,000

■ AREA: 116 SQ KM

HISTORY

Edinburgh owes its existence to the Castle Rock, the glacier-worn stump of a long-extinct volcano that provided a near-perfect defensive position guarding the coastal route from northeast England into central Scotland.

Back in the 7th century the Castle Rock was called Dun Eiden (meaning 'Fort on the Hill Slope'). When it was captured by invaders from the kingdom of Northumbria in north-east England in 638, they took the existing Gaelic name 'Eiden' and tacked it onto their own Old English word for fort, 'burh', to create the name Edinburgh.

Originally a purely defensive site, Edinburgh began to expand in the 12th century when King David I held court at the castle and founded the abbey at Holyrood. The royal court came to prefer Edinburgh to Dunfermline and, as parliament followed the king, Edinburgh became Scotland's capital. The city's first effective town wall was constructed around 1450, enclosing the Old Town as far east as Netherbow and south to the Grassmarket. This overcrowded area – by then the most populous town in Scotland – became a medieval Manhattan, forcing its densely packed inhabitants to build upwards instead of outwards, creating tenements five and six storeys high.

The capital played an important role in the Reformation (1560–1690), led by the Calvinist firebrand John Knox. Mary, Queen of Scots held court in the Palace of Holyroodhouse for six brief years, but when her son James VI succeeded to the English throne in 1603 he moved his court to London. The Act of Union in 1707 further reduced Edinburgh's importance, but its cultural and intellectual life flourished.

In the second half of the 18th century a planned new town was created across the valley to the north of the Old Town. During the Scottish Enlightenment (roughly 1740–1830), Edinburgh became known as 'a hotbed of genius', inhabited by leading scientists and philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Smith.

In the 19th century the population quadrupled to 400,000, not much less than today's, and the Old Town's tenements were taken over by refugees from the Irish famines. A new ring of crescents and circuses was built to the north of New Town, and grey Victorian terraces spread south of the Old Town.

In the 1920s the city's borders expanded again to encompass Leith in the north, Cramond in the west and the Pentland Hills in the south. Following WWII, the city's cultural life blossomed, stimulated by the Edinburgh

EDINBURGH IN...

Two Days

Kick off with coffee at the **Elephant House** (see the boxed text, p103) – choose a window table with a view of the castle – then head uphill to **Edinburgh Castle** (p80) to do the touristy bit. Afterwards, begin strolling down the **Royal Mile** (p81) and think about where to have lunch; **Café Marlayne** (p102) is temptingly close by. Once you've eaten, continue to the foot of the Royal Mile to see the new **Scottish parliament building** (p85), then work up an appetite by climbing **Arthur's Seat** (p84), or ogling the designer shoes in **Harvey Nichols** (p112). Satisfy your hunger with dinner at **Oloroso** (p105), while you watch the sun set over the Firth of Forth.

On day two spend the morning soaking up some history in the **Museum of Scotland** (p86) and in the afternoon catch the bus to Leith for a visit to the **Royal Yacht Britannia** (p90). In the evening have an early dinner at **Daniel's Bistro** (see the boxed text, p105), then scare yourself silly on a guided ghost tour with **Black Hart Storytellers** (p96).

Four Days

A third day calls for a morning stroll around the **Royal Botanic Garden** (p91) then lunch at the **Old Chain Pier** (see the boxed text, p105) and a trip to the seaside village of **Cramond** (p90). Take binoculars (for bird-watching and yacht-spotting) and a book (to read in the sun). Dinner at the **Café Royal Oyster Bar** (p105) could be before or after your sunset walk to the summit of **Calton Hill** (p89).

On day four head out to the pretty harbour village of **Queensferry** (p114), nestled beneath the Forth Bridges, or take a day trip to the enigmatic and beautiful **Rosslyn Chapel** (p115).

International Festival and its fellow traveler the Fringe, both held for the first time in 1947 and now recognised as world-class arts festivals.

Edinburgh entered a new era following the 1997 referendum vote in favour of a devolved Scottish parliament, which first convened in July 1999. The parliament is housed in a controversial new building at the foot of the Royal Mile, where the 2007 elections saw the Scottish National Party – whose long-term aim is independence for Scotland – take power for the first time.

ORIENTATION

The city's most prominent landmarks are Edinburgh Castle, at the western end of the Old Town, and Arthur's Seat (251m), the rocky peak that rises above the eastern end of the Old Town. The Royal Mile (Lawnmarket, High St and Canongate) is the Old Town's main street and runs along the crest of a ridge from the castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse at the foot of Arthur's Seat.

New Town lies to the north of the Old Town, separated by a dip containing Princes Street Gardens and Waverley train station. The city's main shopping street, Princes St, runs along the northern side of the gardens. At its eastern end rises Calton Hill, which is crowned by several monuments.

The Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (ESIC) lies between Waverley train station and Princes St, above Princes Mall. The bus station is nearby in New Town at the northeastern corner of St Andrew Sq, north of the eastern end of Princes St.

Long streets may be known by different names along their length. For example, the southern end of Leith Walk is variously called Union Pl and Antigua St on one side, Elm Row and Greenside Pl on the other.

Maps

The maps in this guide will help you find your way around the city. For coverage of the whole city in more detail, the best maps are Nicolson's *Edinburgh Citymap* and the Ordnance Survey's (OS) *Edinburgh Street Atlas*. You can buy these at the Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre, bookshops and newsagents.

The OS's 1:50,000 Landranger map *Edinburgh, Penicuik & North Berwick* (Sheet No 66) covers the city and the surrounding region

to the south and east at a scale of 1.25 inches to one mile; it's useful for walking in the Pentland Hills and exploring East Lothian.

INFORMATION Bookshops

Blackwell's Bookshop (Map pp76-7; ☎ 622 8222; 53-62 South Bridge; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 9.30am-8pm Tue, 9am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun) The city's principal bookstore; big selection of academic books.

TSO Bookshop (Map pp76-7; ☎ 606 5566; 71 Lothian Rd; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) Has the widest range of OS maps in town.

Waterstone's East End (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 3034; 13 Princes St; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 7.30pm Sat, 10am-7pm Sun); **George St** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 3436; 83 George St; ☎ 9.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 8pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun); **West End** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 2666; 128 Princes St; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-7pm Sun) The West End branch has an in-store café with great views.

Word Power Map pp76-7; ☎ 662 9112; 43 West Nicolson St; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-6pm Sat, noon-5pm Sun) Radical, independent bookshop with wide range of political, gay and feminist literature.

Cultural Centres

Institut Français d'Écosse (Map pp72-3; ☎ 225 5366; www.ifecosse.org.uk; 13 Randolph Cres; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat) Runs courses in French and has a French-language library.

Italian Cultural Institute (Map pp76-7; ☎ 668 2232; www.iicedimburgo.esteri.it; 82 Nicolson St; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri)

Emergency

In an emergency, dial ☎ 999 or ☎ 112 (free from public phones) and ask for police, ambulance, fire brigade or coastguard.

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre (☎ 556 9437; www.rapecrissiscotland.org.uk)

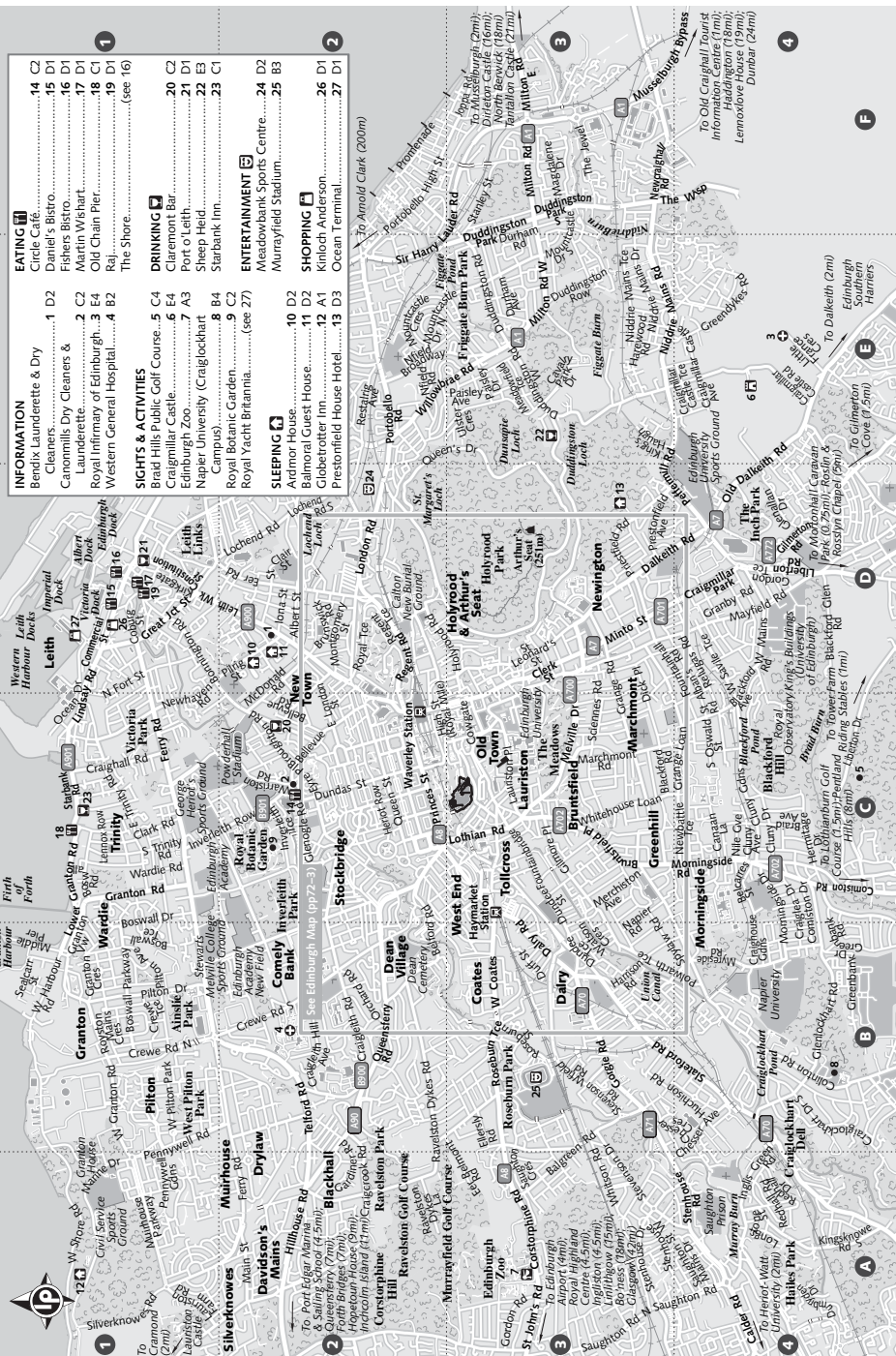
Lothian & Borders Police HQ (Map pp72-3; ☎ 311 3131; www.lbp.police.uk; Fettes Ave)

Lothian & Borders Police Information Centre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 6966; 188 High St; ☎ 10am-7.30pm Mar-Oct, 10am-6pm Nov-Feb) Report a crime or make lost property inquiries here.

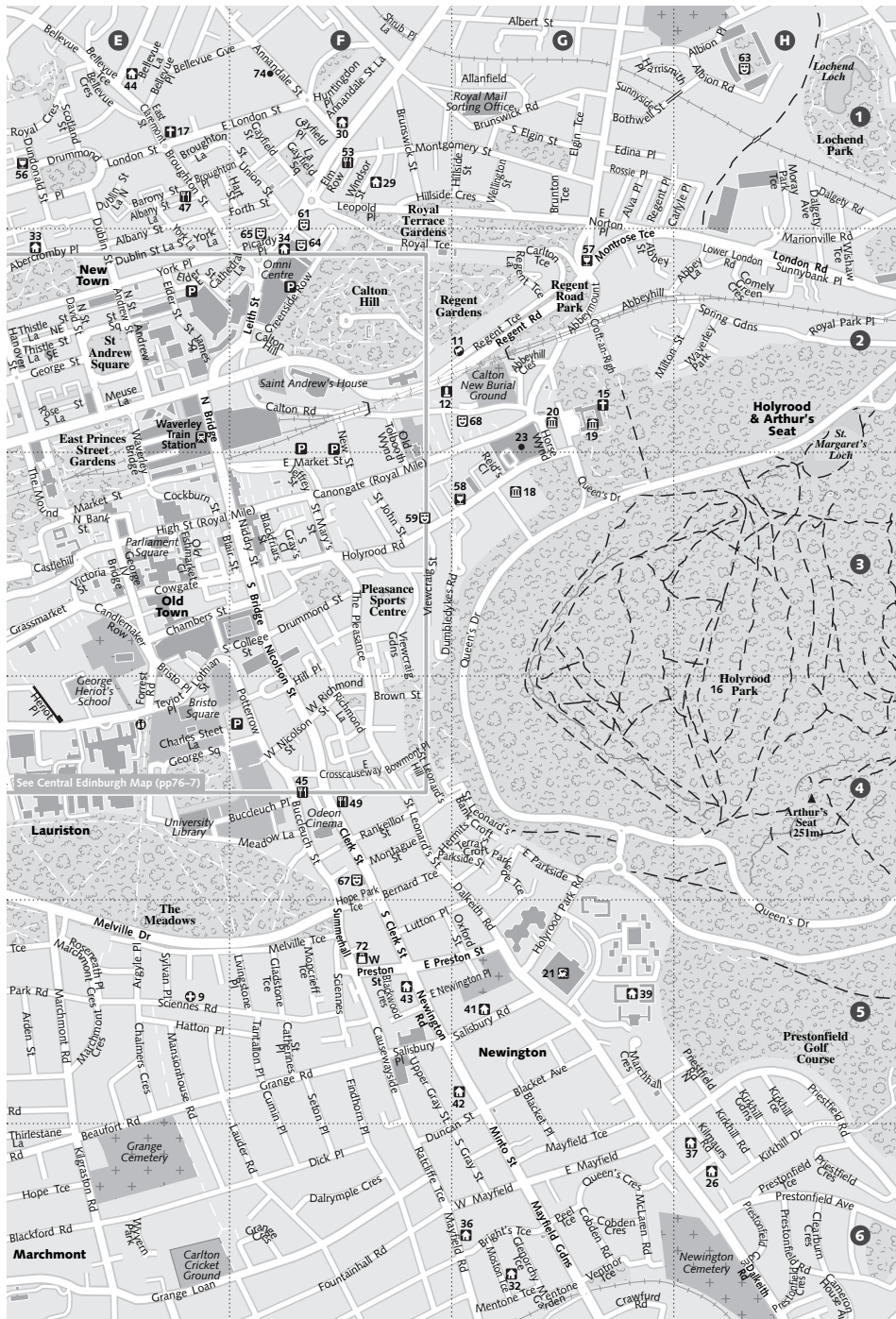
Internet Access

There are internet cafés spread around the city. Some convenient ones:

connect@edinburgh (Map pp76-7; ☎ 473 3800; Princes Mall, 3 Princes St; per 15min 50p) See Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (p79) for hours.



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German Consulate.....	3	B3	
Institut Francais d'Ecosse.....	4	C2	
Irish Consulate.....	5	C2	
Japanese Consulate.....	6	C3	
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Napier University (Merchiston Campus).....	8	C6	
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CC Blooms.....	61	F1	
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			Monster Mash.....	114	E5	Lothian Buses Travel Shop (Waverley Bridge).....	175	E3
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easyInternetcafé (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 3580; www.easy-everything.com; 58 Rose St; per hr £1; ☎ 7.30am-10.30pm)
e-corner (Map pp76-7; ☎ 558 7858; www.e-corner.co.uk; 55 Blackfriars St; per 20min £1; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm Sat & Sun)
Internet Café (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 5400; 98 West Bow; per 30min £1; ☎ 10am-11pm)

There are several internet-enabled telephone boxes (10p a minute, 50p minimum) scattered around the city centre, and countless wi-fi hot spots – search on www.jiwire.com.

Internet Resources

City of Edinburgh Council (www.edinburgh.gov.uk)
 The city council's official site, with a useful events guide.

City of Edinburgh Museums & Galleries (www.ac.org.uk) Details of events and exhibitions in the city council's museums and galleries.

Edinburgh Architecture (www.edinburgharchitecture.co.uk) Informative site dedicated to the city's modern architecture.

Edinburgh & Lothians Tourist Board (www.edinburgh.org) Official tourist-board site, with listings of accommodation, sights, activities and events.

Your Edinburgh (www.youredinburgh.info) Comprehensive directory of Edinburgh-related websites.

Laundry

Most of Edinburgh's backpacker hostels will wash and dry a load of laundry for you for around £4; some have self-service, coin-operated washing machines where you do the laundry yourself. There are self-service laundries all over the city – expect to pay around £4 for a wash and dry. Check the *Yellow Pages* under *Laundrette* to find the nearest.

Bendix Laundrette & Dry Cleaners (Map p71; ☎ 554 2180; 342 Leith Walk; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun)

Canonmills Dry Cleaners & Laundrette (Map p71; ☎ 556 3199; 7 Huntly St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun)

Tarvit Laundrette (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 6382; 7-9 Tarvit St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun)

Left Luggage

Edinburgh airport left-luggage office (per item per 4hr/24hr £5/6; ☎ 5.15am-10.45pm) On the ground floor between check-in and international arrivals.

St Andrew Sq bus and coach station lockers (Map pp76-7; small/medium/large locker per 24hr £3/4/5; ☎ 6am-midnight)

Waverley train station left-luggage office (Map pp76-7; per item per 24hr £6; ☎ 7am-11pm) Beside platform 1.

Libraries

Central Library (Map pp76-7; ☎ 242 8020; George IV Bridge; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) General lending library with a room devoted to Edinburgh (one floor down), another to all things Scottish (in the basement), and a reference room on the top floor.

National Library of Scotland (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 4531; www.nls.uk; George IV Bridge; ☎ 9.30am-8.30pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 10am-8.30pm Wed, 9.30am-1pm Sat) Copyright library with a reference-only reading room; you'll need ID (passport or driving licence) to get admission.

Media

Edinburgh's home-grown daily newspapers include the *Scotsman* (www.scotsman.com), a quality daily covering Scottish, UK and international news, sport and current affairs, and the *Edinburgh Evening News* (www.edinburghnews.com), covering news and entertainment in the city and its environs; *Scotland on Sunday* is the weekend newspaper from the same publisher.

Medical Services

Chemists (pharmacists) can advise you on minor ailments. At least one local chemist remains open round the clock – its location will be displayed in the windows of other chemists. For urgent medical advice you can call the **NHS 24 Helpline** (☎ 08454 24 24 24; www.nhs24.com).

For urgent dental treatment you can visit the walk-in **Chalmers Dental Centre** (Map pp76-7; 3 Chalmers St; ☎ 9am-4.45pm Mon-Thu, 9am-4.15pm Fri). In the case of a dental emergency in the evenings or at weekends, call **Lothian Dental Advice Line** (☎ 536 4800).

Boots (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 6757; 48 Shandwick Pl; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat, 10.30am-4.30pm Sun) Chemist open longer hours than most.

Royal Hospital for Sick Children (Map pp72-3; ☎ 536 0000; 9 Sciennes Rd) Casualty department for children aged under 13 years; located in Marchmont.

Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (Map p71; ☎ 536 1000; 51 Little France Cres, Old Dalkeith Rd) Edinburgh's main general hospital; has 24-hour accident and emergency department.

Western General Hospital (Map p71; ☎ 537 1330; Crewe Rd South; ☎ 9am-9pm) For non-life-threatening injuries and ailments, you can attend the Minor Injuries Unit without having to make an appointment.

Money

There are banks and ATMs all over the city. You can change currency and travellers cheques at bureaux de change scattered throughout the city centre, and in banks, post offices and travel agencies. Banks generally offer the best rates.

American Express (Map pp76-7; ☎ 718 2501; 69 George St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) Charges no commission on Amex travellers cheques, 2% on cash and generally offers a good rate of exchange.

Bank of Scotland (Map pp76-7; ☎ 465 3900; 38 St Andrew Sq; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, 10am-5pm Wed)

Fexco (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 3953; Princes Mall, 3 Princes St) Convenient location inside the Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (below); charges no commission on cash, but has a poor exchange rate.

Royal Bank of Scotland (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 8555; 36 St Andrew Sq; ☎ 9.15am-4.45pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 10am-4.45pm Wed, 10am-2pm Sat)

Thomas Cook (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 5500; 52 Hanover St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon, Tue & Thu-Sat, 10am-5.30pm Wed) Charges 2% commission (minimum £3) on both cash and travellers cheques.

Post

Frederick St post office (Map pp76-7; 40 Frederick St) In New Town.

Main post office (Map pp76-7; ☎ 0845 722 3344; St James Centre, Leith St; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat) Items addressed to poste restante can be picked up here.

St Mary's St post office (Map pp76-7; 46 St Mary's St) In Old Town.

Telephone

There are telephone booths scattered all over the city; see also the Directory, p446.

Tourist Information

Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (ESIC; Map pp76-7; ☎ 0845 225 5121; info@visitscotland.com; Princes Mall, 3 Princes St; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sun May, Jun & Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Wed, 9am-6pm Thu-Sun Oct-Apr) Includes an accommodation booking service, currency exchange, gift and bookshop, internet access, and counters selling tickets for Edinburgh city tours and Scottish Citylink bus services.

Old Craighall tourist office (☎ 653 6172; Old Craighall Junction, A1) In a service area on the main A1 road, about 5 miles east of the city centre.

Tourist & Airport Information Desk (☎ 0845 225 5121) At Edinburgh airport.

Travel Agencies

There are hundreds of travel agencies all over the city. Two agencies that specialise in budget and student travel:

STA Travel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 0871 468 0617; www.statravel.co.uk; 27 Forrest Rd; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 10am-7pm Thu, 10am-5pm Sat)

Student Flights (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 6868; www.studentflight.co.uk; 53 Forrest Rd; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat)

Universities

Edinburgh has three universities. The oldest, biggest and most prestigious is the University of Edinburgh, with more than 15,000 undergraduates.

Heriot-Watt University (☎ 449 5111; www.hw.ac.uk) The main campus is southwest of the city at Riccarton, near Currie.

Napier University (☎ 444 2266; www.napier.ac.uk) Craiglockhart campus (Map p71; 219 Colinton Rd); Merchiston campus (Map pp72-3; 10 Colinton Rd)

University of Edinburgh Information Centre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 650 1000; www.ed.ac.uk; 7-11 Nicolson St; ☎ 9.15am-5pm Mon-Fri) Provides details of short-term courses.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Edinburgh is safer than most cities of a similar size, but it has its share of crime so all of the normal big-city precautions apply here.

Lothian Rd, Dalry Rd, Rose St and the western end of Princes St, at the junction with Shandwick Pl and Queensferry and Hope Sts, can get a bit rowdy on Friday and Saturday nights after the pubs close. Calton Hill offers good views during the day but is best avoided at night. Women on their own should avoid walking across the Meadows after dark and walking in the red-light district between Salamander St and Leith Links, in Leith.

SIGHTS

Edinburgh's main attractions are concentrated in the city centre – on and around the Old Town's Royal Mile between the castle and Holyrood, and in New Town. A major exception is the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, which is in the redeveloped docklands district of Leith, 2 miles northeast of the centre.

If you tire of sightseeing, good areas for aimless wandering include the posh suburbs of Stockbridge and Morningside, the pretty riverside village of Cramond, and the winding footpaths of Calton Hill and Arthur's Seat.

Old Town

Edinburgh's Old Town stretches along a ridge to the east of the castle, and tumbles down Victoria St to the broad expanse of the Grassmarket. It's a jagged and jumbled maze of masonry riddled with closes (alleys) and wynds (narrow lanes), stairs and vaults, and left along its spine by the cobbled ravine of the Royal Mile.

Until the founding of New Town in the 18th century, old Edinburgh was an overcrowded and insanitary hive of humanity squeezed between the boggy ground of the Nor' Loch (North Loch, now drained and occupied by Princes Street Gardens) to the north and the city walls to the south and east. The only way for the town to expand was upwards, and the five- and six-storey tenements that were raised along the Royal Mile in the 16th and 17th centuries were the skyscrapers of their day, remarked upon with wonder by visiting writers such as Daniel Defoe. All classes of society, from beggars to magistrates, lived cheek by jowl in these urban ants' nests, the wealthy occupying the middle floors – high enough to be above the noise and stink of the streets, but not so high that climbing the stairs would be too tiring – while the poor squeezed into attics, basements, cellars and vaults amid the rats, rubbish and raw sewage.

The renovated Old Town tenements still support a thriving city-centre community, and today the street level is crammed with cafés, restaurants, bars, backpacker hostels and tacky souvenir shops. Few visitors wander beyond the main drag of the Royal Mile, but it's worth taking time to explore the countless closes that lead off the street into quiet courtyards, often with unexpected views of city, sea and hills.

EDINBURGH CASTLE

The brooding, black crags of Castle Rock rising above the western end of Princes St are the very reason for Edinburgh's existence. This rocky hill was the most easily defended hill-top on the invasion route between England and central Scotland, a route followed by countless armies from the Roman legions of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD to the Jacobite troops of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745.

Edinburgh Castle (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 9846; Castle Hill; adult/concession/child incl audio guide £11/9/5.50; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Oct-Mar, last admis-

sion 45min before closing) has played a pivotal role in Scottish history, both as a royal residence – King Malcolm Canmore (r 1058-93) and Queen Margaret first made their home here in the 11th century – and as a military stronghold. The castle last saw military action in 1745; from then until the 1920s it served as the British army's main base in Scotland. Today it is one of Scotland's most atmospheric, most popular – and most expensive – tourist attractions.

The **Entrance Gateway**, flanked by statues of Robert the Bruce and William Wallace, opens to a cobbled lane that leads up beneath the 16th-century **Portcullis Gate** to the cannon ranged along the Argyle and Mills Mount batteries. The battlements here have great views over New Town to the Firth of Forth.

At the far end of Mills Mount Battery is the famous **One O'Clock Gun**, where crowds gather to watch a gleaming WWII 25-pounder fire an ear-splitting time signal at exactly 1pm (every day except Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday).

At the western end of the castle, to the left of the castle restaurant, a road leads down to the **National War Museum of Scotland** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 247 4413; admission incl in Edinburgh Castle ticket; ☎ 9.45am-5.45pm Apr-Oct, 9.45am-4.45pm Nov-Mar), which brings Scotland's military history vividly to life. The exhibits have been personalised by telling the stories of the original owners of the objects on display, making it easier to empathise with the experiences of war than any dry display of dusty weaponry ever could.

South of Mills Mount, the road curls up leftwards through **Foog's Gate** to the highest part of Castle Rock, crowned by the tiny, Romanesque **St Margaret's Chapel**, the oldest surviving building in Edinburgh. It was probably built by David I or Alexander I in memory of their mother, Queen Margaret, sometime around 1130 (she was canonised in 1250). Beside the chapel stands **Mons Meg**, a giant 15th-century siege gun built at Mons (in what is now Belgium) in 1449.

The main group of buildings on the summit of Castle Rock are ranged around Crown Sq, dominated by the shrine of the **Scottish National War Memorial**. Opposite is the **Great Hall**, built for James IV (r 1488-1513) as a ceremonial hall and used as a meeting place for the Scottish parliament until 1639. Its most remarkable feature is the original, 16th-century hammer-beam roof.

On the eastern side of the square is the **Royal Palace**, built during the 15th and 16th centuries, where a series of historical tableaux leads to the highlight of the castle – a strongroom housing the **Honours of Scotland** (the Scottish crown jewels), the oldest surviving crown jewels in Europe. Locked away in a chest following the Act of Union in 1707, the crown (made in 1540 from the gold of Robert the Bruce's 14th-century coronet), sword and sceptre lay forgotten until they were unearthed at the instigation of the novelist Sir Walter Scott in 1818. Also on display here is the **Stone of Destiny** (see the boxed text, below).

Among the neighbouring **Royal Apartments** is the bedchamber where Mary, Queen of Scots gave birth to her son James VI, who was to unite the crowns of Scotland and England in 1603.

The **Castle Vaults** beneath the Great Hall (entered from Crown Sq via the Prisons of War exhibit) were used variously as store-rooms, bakeries and prison. The vaults have been done up to resemble 18th- and early-19th-century prisons, where graffiti carved by French and American prisoners can be seen on the ancient wooden doors.

THE ROYAL MILE

This mile-long street earned its regal nickname in the 16th century when it was used by the king to travel between the castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. There are four sections – Castlehill, Lawnmarket, High St and Canongate – whose names reflect their historical origins. Allow at least half a day to wander down the Mile, taking time to visit the attractions.

Castlehill

A short distance downhill from the Castle Esplanade, a former school houses the **Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 0441; 354 Castlehill; adult/child incl tour & tasting £9.25/4.95; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Sep-May; ☎). The centre explains the making of whisky from barley to bottle, in a series of exhibits that combine sight, sound and smell; look out for the distillery cat! There's also a restaurant that serves traditional Scottish dishes with, where possible, a dash of whisky thrown in.

The quaint building across the street is the **Outlook Tower & Camera Obscura** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 3709; Castlehill; adult/child £7.50/5; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Jul & Aug, 9.30am-6pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar). The 'camera obscura' itself is a curious

THE STONE OF DESTINY

On St Andrew's Day 1996 a block of sandstone – 26½ inches by 16½ inches by 11 inches in size, with rusted iron hoops at either end – was installed with much pomp and ceremony in Edinburgh Castle. For the previous 700 years it had lain in London, beneath the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. Almost all English, and later British, monarchs from Edward II in 1307 to Elizabeth II in 1953 have parked their backsides firmly over this stone during their coronation ceremony.

The legendary Stone of Destiny – said to have originated in the Holy Land, and on which Scottish kings placed their feet during their coronation (not their bums; the English got that bit wrong) – was stolen from Scone Abbey near Perth by King Edward I of England in 1296. It was taken to London and there it remained for seven centuries – except for a brief removal to Gloucester during WWII air raids, and a three-month sojourn in Scotland after it was stolen by Scottish Nationalist students at Christmas in 1950 – an enduring symbol of Scotland's subjugation by England.

The Stone of Destiny returned to the political limelight in 1996, when the then Scottish Secretary and Conservative Party MP, Michael Forsyth, arranged for the return of the sandstone block to Scotland. A blatant attempt to boost the flagging popularity of the Conservative Party in Scotland prior to a general election, Forsyth's publicity stunt failed miserably. The Scots said thanks very much for the stone and then, in May 1997, voted every Conservative MP in Scotland into oblivion.

Many people, however, believe that Edward I was fobbed off with a shoddy imitation in 1296 and that the true Stone of Destiny remains safely hidden somewhere in Scotland. This is not impossible – some descriptions of the original state that it was made of black marble and decorated with elaborate carvings. Interested parties should read *Stone of Destiny* (1997) by Pat Gerber, which details the history of Scotland's most famous lump of rock.

19th-century device – in constant use since 1853 – that uses lenses and mirrors to throw a live image of the city onto a large horizontal screen. The accompanying commentary is entertaining and the whole experience has a quirky charm. Stairs lead up through various displays on optics to the Outlook Tower, which offers great views over the city.

With Edinburgh's tallest spire (71.7m), the **Highland Tolbooth Kirk** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 473 2000; www.thehub-edinburgh.com; Castlehill; admission free; ☎ 10am–7pm), the ticket office and information centre for the Edinburgh Festival. There's also a good café here.

Lawnmarket

Lawnmarket (a corruption of 'Landmarket', a market selling goods from the land outside the city) takes its name from the large cloth market that flourished here until the 18th century. This was the poshest part of the Old Town, where many of its most distinguished citizens made their homes.

One of these was the merchant Thomas Gledstones, who in 1617 purchased the tenement later known as **Gladstone's Land** (NTS; Map pp76–7; ☎ 226 5856; 477 Lawnmarket; adult/child £5/4; ☎ 10am–7pm Jul & Aug, 10am–5pm Apr–Jun, Sep & Oct). It contains fine painted ceilings, walls and beams, and some splendid furniture from the 17th and 18th centuries. The volunteer guides provide a wealth of anecdotes and a detailed history.

Tucked down a close just east of Gladstone's Land you'll find the **Writers' Museum** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 529 4901; Lady Stair's Close, Lawnmarket; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat year-round, and 2–5pm Sun during Edinburgh Festival). Located in Lady Stair's House (1622), the museum contains manuscripts and memorabilia belonging to Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.

High St

High St, which stretches from George IV Bridge down to the Netherbow at St Mary's St, is the heart and soul of the Old Town, home to the city's main church, the Law Courts, the city council and – until 1707 – the Scottish parliament.

Dominating High St is the great grey bulk of **St Giles Cathedral** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 225 9442; High St;

admission free, £3 donation suggested; ☎ 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat, 1–5pm Sun May–Sep, 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun Oct–Apr). Properly called the High Kirk of Edinburgh (it was only a true cathedral – the seat of a bishop – from 1633 to 1638 and from 1661 to 1689), St Giles Cathedral was named after the patron saint of cripples and beggars. A Norman-style church was built here in 1126 but was destroyed by English invaders in 1385; the only substantial remains are the central piers that support the tower.

The present church dates largely from the 15th century – the beautiful crown spire was completed in 1495 – but much of it was restored in the 19th century. The interior lacks grandeur but is rich in history: St Giles was at the heart of the Scottish Reformation, and John Knox served as minister here from 1559 to 1572. One of the most interesting corners of the kirk is the **Thistle Chapel**, built in 1911 for the Knights of the Most Ancient & Most Noble Order of the Thistle. The elaborately carved Gothic-style stalls have canopies topped with the helms and arms of the 16 knights – look out for the bagpipe-playing angel amid the vaulting.

By the side of the street, outside the western door of St Giles, is a cobblestone **Heart of Midlothian** (Map pp76–7) set into the paving. This marks the site of the Tolbooth. Built in the 15th century and demolished in the early 19th century, the Tolbooth served variously as a meeting place for parliament, the town council and the General Assembly of the Reformed Kirk, before becoming law courts and, finally, a notorious prison and place of execution. Passers-by traditionally spit on the heart for luck (don't stand downwind!).

At the other end of St Giles is the **Mercat Cross** (Map pp76–7), a 19th-century copy of the 1365 original, where merchants and traders met to transact business and royal proclamations were read.

Next to the Mercat Cross is the **Loch Ness Discovery Centre** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 225 2290; 1 Parliament Sq; adult/child £4.95/3.95; ☎ 9.30am–10pm Jul & Aug, 9.30am–8pm Apr–Jun, Sep & Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–Mar), which explores the legend of the Loch Ness Monster (for more on Nessie, see the boxed text, p328) by means of various photographic displays and a 3-D movie. Plus, of course, a gift shop crammed with cheekily priced cuddly toys in the form of Nessie...

Across from the Cross is the **City Chambers** (Map pp76–7), originally built by John Adam

(brother of Robert) between 1753 and 1761 to serve as the Royal Exchange – a covered meeting place for city merchants. However, the merchants preferred their old stamping grounds in the street and the building became the city council offices in 1811.

Part of the Royal Exchange was built over the sealed-off remains of Mary King's Close, and the lower levels of this medieval Old Town alley have survived almost unchanged in the foundations of the City Chambers for 250 years. Now open to the public as the **Real Mary King's Close** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 0870 243 0160; 2 Warriston's Close, Writers Ct, High St; adult/child £9.50/6; ☎ 10am–9pm Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm Sun–Fri, 10am–9pm Sat Nov–Mar), this spooky, subterranean labyrinth is a fascinating insight into the daily life of 16th- and 17th-century Edinburgh. Costumed characters give tours through a 16th-century town house and the plague-stricken home of a 17th-century gravedigger. Tours must be booked in advance.

Halfway down the next block is 'the noisiest museum in the world' – the **Museum of Childhood** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 529 4142; 42 High St; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 2–5pm Sun). Often filled with the chatter of excited children, it covers serious issues related to childhood – health, education, upbringing and so on – but also has an enormous collection of toys, dolls, games and books. (Note – it may be closed on Sundays from 2008; phone to check.)

The Royal Mile narrows at the foot of High St beside the jutting façade of **John Knox House** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 556 9579; 43–45 High St; adult/child £3.50/2.75; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Sat year-round, plus noon–6pm Sun Jul & Aug). This is the oldest surviving tenement in Edinburgh, dating from around 1490; John Knox, an influential church reformer and leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, is thought to have lived here from 1561 to 1572. The labyrinthine interior has some beautiful painted-timber ceilings and an interesting display on Knox' life and work.

Canongate

Canongate, the stretch of the Royal Mile from Netherbow to Holyrood, takes its name from the Augustinian canons (monks) of Holyrood Abbey. From the 16th century it was home to aristocrats attracted to the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Originally governed by the monks, Canongate was an independent burgh separate from Edinburgh until 1856.

One of the surviving symbols of Canongate's former independence is the **Canongate Tolbooth** (Map pp76–7). Built in 1591, it served successively as a collection point for tolls (taxes), a council house, a courtroom and a jail. With its picturesque turrets and projecting clock, it's an interesting example of 16th-century architecture, and now houses a fascinating museum called the **People's Story** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 529 4057; 163 Canongate; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat year-round, 2–5pm Sun Aug), which covers the life, work and pastimes of ordinary Edinburgh folk from the 18th century to the present day.

Across the street from the Tolbooth is Huntly House. Built in 1570, it now houses the **Museum of Edinburgh** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 529 4143; 142 Canongate; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat year-round, plus 2–5pm Sun Aug). It covers the history of the city from prehistory to the present. Exhibits of national importance include an original copy of the National Covenant of 1638, but the big crowd-pleaser is the dog collar and feeding bowl that once belonged to Greyfriars Bobby, the city's most famous canine citizen (see p85).

Downhill on the left is the attractive curved gable of the **Canongate Kirk** (Map pp76–7), built in 1688. The kirkyard contains the graves of several famous people, including the economist Adam Smith (1723–90), author of *The Wealth of Nations*, Mrs Agnes MacLehose (the 'Clarinda' of Robert Burns' love poems), and the 18th-century poet Robert Fergusson (1750–74). Fergusson was much admired by Robert Burns, who paid for the gravestone and penned the epitaph – take a look at the inscription on the back.

HOLYROOD

The **Palace of Holyroodhouse** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 556 5100; www.royal.gov.uk; Canongate; adult/child £9.50/5.50; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Apr–Oct, 9.30am–4.30pm Nov–Mar) is the royal family's official residence in Scotland, but is most famous as the 16th-century home of the ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots. The palace developed from a guesthouse attached to Holyrood Abbey, which was extended by King James IV in 1501. The oldest surviving part of the building, the northwestern tower, was built in 1529 as a royal apartment for James V and his wife, Mary of Guise. Mary, Queen of Scots spent six turbulent years here, during which time she debated with John Knox, married both her first and second husbands, and

witnessed the murder of her secretary Rizzio. The palace is closed to the public when the royal family is visiting and during state functions (usually in mid-May, and mid-June to early July; check the website for exact dates).

The guided tour leads you through a series of impressive royal apartments, ending in the **Great Gallery**. The 89 portraits of Scottish kings were commissioned by Charles II and supposedly record his unbroken lineage from Scots, the Egyptian pharaoh's daughter who discovered the infant Moses in a reed basket on the banks of the Nile.

But the highlight of the tour is **Mary, Queen of Scots' Bed Chamber**, home to the unfortunate Mary from 1561 to 1567, and connected by a secret stairway to her husband's bedchamber. It was here that her jealous first husband, Lord Darnley, restrained the pregnant queen while his henchmen murdered her secretary – and favourite – David Rizzio. A plaque in the neighbouring room marks the spot where he bled to death.

The exit from the palace leads into the ruins of **Holyrood Abbey** (Map pp72–3). King David I founded the abbey here in the shadow of Salisbury Crags in 1128. It was probably named after a fragment of the True Cross (wood is an old Scots word for cross), said to have been brought to Scotland by his mother, St Margaret. Most of the surviving ruins date from the 12th and 13th centuries, although a doorway in the far southeastern corner has survived from the original Norman church.

The **Queen's Gallery** (Map pp72–3; adult/child £5/3, joint ticket incl admission to palace £13/7.50; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Apr–Oct, 9.30am–4.30pm Nov–Mar), beside the palace ticket office, is a showcase for a range of changing exhibitions of art from the Royal Collections.

The modernistic white marquee pitched beneath Salisbury Crags marks **Our Dynamic Earth** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 550 7800; Holyrood Rd; adult/child £8.95/5.75; ☎ 10am–6pm Jul & Aug, 10am–5pm Apr–Jun, Sep & Oct, 10am–5pm Wed–Sun Nov–Mar, last admission 70min before closing), billed as an interactive, multimedia journey of discovery through Earth's history from the Big Bang to the present day. Hugely popular with kids of all ages, it's a slick extravaganza of whizz-bang special effects cleverly designed to fire up young minds with curiosity about all things geological and environmental. Its true purpose, of course, is to disgorge you into a gift shop where you can buy model dinosaurs and souvenir T-shirts.

In **Holyrood Park** (Map pp72–3), Edinburgh is blessed by having a little bit of wilderness in the heart of the city. The former hunting ground of Scottish monarchs, the park covers 263 hectares of varied landscape, including crags, moorland and loch. The highest point is the 251m summit of **Arthur's Seat** (Map p71), the deeply eroded remnant of a long-extinct volcano. Holyrood park can be circumnavigated by car or bike along Queen's Dr (it is closed to motorised traffic on Sunday), and you can hike from Holyrood to the summit in 45 minutes.

NORTH OF THE ROYAL MILE

Cockburn St, lined with trendy fashion, jewellery and music shops, leads down from the Royal Mile to Waverley Bridge. A right turn into Market St leads to the **Fruitmarket Gallery** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 225 2383; www.fruitmarket.co.uk; 45 Market St; admission free; ☎ 11am–6pm Mon–Sat, noon–5pm Sun). One of Edinburgh's most innovative and popular galleries, the Fruitmarket showcases contemporary Scottish and international artists, and also has an excellent arts bookshop and café.

Across the street is the **City Art Centre** (Map pp76–7; ☎ 529 3993; www.cac.org.uk; 2 Market St; admission free except for temporary exhibitions; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, noon–5pm Sun), comprising six floors of exhibitions with a variety of themes, including an extensive collection of Scottish art. (Note – it may be closed Sundays from 2008.)

SOUTH OF THE ROYAL MILE

The site of a cattle market from the 15th century until the start of the 20th, the **Grassmarket** (Map pp76–7) has always been a focal point of the Old Town. It was also the city's main place of execution, and over 100 martyred Covenanters are commemorated by a monument at the eastern end, where the gallows used to stand. The notorious murderers Burke and Hare operated from a now-vanished close off the western end. In 1827 they enticed at least 18 victims to their boarding house, suffocated them and sold the bodies to Edinburgh's medical schools. The law finally caught up with Burke and Hare – the latter turned King's evidence and testified against Burke, who was hanged outside St Giles in 1828. In an ironic twist, his corpse was donated to the anatomy school for public dissection, and a pocket book was made from his flayed skin (now on display in the Surgeons' Hall Museums, p95).

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BUILDING

The new **Scottish parliament building** (Map pp72–3; ☎ 348 5200; www.scottish.parliament.uk; admission free; ☎ 9am–7pm Tue–Thu, 10am–6pm Mon & Fri in session, 10am–6pm Mon–Fri in recess Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm in recess Nov–Mar; ♿), built on the site of a former brewery close to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, was officially opened by HM the Queen in October 2005.

The public areas of the parliament building – the Main Hall, where there is an exhibition, a shop and café, and the public gallery in the Debating Chamber – are open to visitors; alternatively you can pay for a guided tour (adult/child £5/3) which includes a visit to the Debating Chamber, a committee room, the Garden Lobby and, if possible, the office of an MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament). If you want to see the parliament in session, check in advance that it will be sitting – business days are normally Tuesday to Thursday year-round.

Enric Miralles (1955–2000), the architect who conceived the Scottish parliament building, believed that a building could be a work of art. However, the weird concrete confection that has sprouted at the foot of Salisbury Crags has left the good people of Edinburgh staring and scratching their heads in confusion. What does it all mean? The strange forms of the exterior are all symbolic in some way, from the oddly shaped windows on the west wall (inspired by the silhouette of the *Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch*, one of Scotland's most famous paintings), to the ground plan of the whole complex, which represents a 'flower of democracy rooted in Scottish soil' (best seen looking down from Salisbury Crags).

The Main Hall, inside the public entrance, has a low, triple-arched ceiling of polished concrete, like a cave, or cellar, or castle vault. It is a dimly lit space, the starting point for a metaphorical journey from this relative darkness up to the Debating Chamber (sitting directly above the Main Hall), which is, in contrast, a palace of light – the light of democracy. This magnificent chamber is the centrepiece of the parliament, designed not to glorify but to humble the politicians who sit within it. The windows face Calton Hill, allowing MSPs to look up to its monuments (reminders of the Scottish Enlightenment), while the massive, pointed oak beams of the roof are suspended by steel threads above the MSPs' heads like so many Damoclean swords.

Nowadays the broad, open square, edged by tall tenements and dominated by the looming castle, has many lively pubs and restaurants, including the **White Hart Inn** (Map pp76–7), which was once patronised by Robert Burns. **Cowgate** – the long, dark ravine leading eastwards from the Grassmarket – was once the road along which cattle were driven from the pastures around Arthur's Seat to the safety of the city walls. Today it is the heart of Edinburgh's nightlife, with around two dozen clubs and bars within five minutes' walk of each other.

Candlemaker Row leads from the eastern end of the Grassmarket towards one of Edinburgh's most famous churches. **Greyfriars Kirk** (Map pp76–7) was built on the site of a Franciscan friary and opened for worship on Christmas Day 1620. In 1638 the National Covenant was signed here, rejecting Charles I's attempts to impose episcopacy and a new English prayer book, and affirming the independence of the Scottish Church. Many who signed were later executed at the Grassmarket and, in 1679, 1200 Covenanters were held

prisoner in terrible conditions in the south-western corner of the kirkyard. There's a small exhibition inside the church.

Hemmed in by high walls and overlooked by the brooding presence of the castle, **Greyfriars Kirkyard** is one of Edinburgh's most evocative cemeteries, a peaceful green oasis dotted with elaborate monuments. Many famous Edinburgh names are buried here, including the poet Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), architect William Adam (1689–1748) and William Smellie (1740–95), the editor of the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. If you want to experience the graveyard at its scariest – inside a burial vault, in the dark, at night – go on one of Black Hart Storytellers' guided tours (see p96).

However, the memorial that draws the biggest crowds is the tiny **Greyfriars Bobby statue** (Map pp76–7), in front of the pub beside the kirkyard gate. Bobby was a Skye terrier who, from 1858 to 1872, maintained a vigil over the grave of his master, an Edinburgh police officer. The story was immortalised (and romanticised) in a novel by Eleanor Atkinson

in 1912, and in 1963 was made into a movie by – who else? – Walt Disney. Bobby's own grave, marked by a small, pink granite stone, is just inside the entrance to the kirkyard. You can see his original collar and bowl in the Museum of Edinburgh (p83).

CHAMBERS STREET

The broad, elegant Chambers St stretches eastwards from Greyfriars Bobby, dominated by the long façade of the **National Museum of Scotland** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 247 4422; www.nms.ac.uk; Chambers St; admission free, special exhibitions extra; ☎ 10am-5pm). The collections are spread between two buildings, one modern, one Victorian.

The golden stone and striking modern architecture of the **Museum of Scotland** building, opened in 1998, is one of the city's most distinctive landmarks. The five floors of the museum trace the history of Scotland from geological beginnings to the 1990s, with many imaginative and stimulating exhibits – audio guides are available in several languages. Highlights include the Monymusk Reliquary, a tiny silver casket dating from AD 750, which is said to have been carried into battle with Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn in 1314, and a set of charming 12th-century chess pieces made from walrus ivory. Don't forget to take the lift to the roof terrace for a fantastic view of the castle.

The Museum of Scotland connects with the Victorian **Royal Museum** building, dating from 1861, whose stolid, grey exterior gives way to a bright and airy, glass-roofed entrance hall. The museum houses an eclectic collection covering natural history, archaeology, scientific and industrial technology, and the decorative arts of ancient Egypt, Islam, China, Japan, Korea and the West.

New Town

Edinburgh's New Town lies north of the Old Town, on a ridge running parallel to the Royal Mile and separated from it by the valley of Princes Street Gardens. Its regular grid of elegant, Georgian terraces is a complete contrast to the chaotic tangle of tenements and wynds that characterise the Old Town.

Between the end of the 14th century and the start of the 18th, the population of Edinburgh – still confined within the walls of the Old Town – increased from 2000 to 50,000. The tottering tenements were unsafe and occasionally collapsed, fire was an ever-present

danger, and the overcrowding and squalor became unbearable.

When the Act of Union in 1707 brought the prospect of long-term stability, the upper classes were keen to find healthier, more spacious living quarters, and in 1766 the lord provost of Edinburgh announced an architectural competition to design an extension to the city. It was won by an unknown 23-year-old, James Craig, a self-taught architect whose simple and elegant plan envisaged the main axis being George St, with grand squares at either end, and with building restricted to one side only of Princes and Queen Sts so that the houses enjoyed views over the Firth of Forth to the north and to the castle and Old Town to the south.

During the 18th and 19th centuries New Town continued to sprout squares, circuses, parks and terraces, with some of its finest neoclassical architecture designed by Robert Adam. Today Edinburgh's New Town remains the world's most complete and unspoilt example of Georgian architecture and town planning. Along with the Old Town, it was declared a Unesco World Heritage site in 1995.

PRINCES STREET

Princes St is one of the world's most spectacular shopping streets. Built up on the north side only, it catches the sun in summer and allows expansive views across Princes Street Gardens to the castle and the crowded skyline of the Old Town.

The western end of Princes St is dominated by the red-sandstone edifice of the Caledonian Hilton Hotel, and the tower of **St John's Church** (Map pp76-7), worth visiting for its fine Gothic Revival interior. It overlooks **St Cuthbert's Parish Church** (Map pp76-7), built in the 1890s on a site of great antiquity – there has been a church here since at least the 12th century, and perhaps since the 7th century. There is a circular **watchtower** in the graveyard – a reminder of the Burke and Hare days when graves had to be guarded against robbers.

At the eastern end is the prominent clock tower – traditionally three minutes fast so that you don't miss your train – of the **Balmoral Hotel** (p102), and the beautiful 1788 **Register House** (Map pp76-7), designed by Robert Adam, with a statue of the duke of Wellington on horseback in front. It houses the National Archives of Scotland.

Princes Street Gardens (Map pp76-7) lie in a valley that was once occupied by the Nor' Loch, a boggy depression that was drained in the early 19th century. The gardens are split in the middle by **The Mound**, which was created by around two million cart-loads of earth excavated from the foundations of New Town being dumped here to provide a road link across the valley to the Old Town. It was completed in 1830.

The eastern half of the gardens is dominated by the massive Gothic spire of the **Scott Monument** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 529 4068; East Princes Street Gardens; admission £3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun Oct-Mar), built by public subscription in memory of the novelist Sir Walter Scott after his death in 1832. Inside you can see an exhibition on Scott's life, and climb the 287 steps to the top for a superb view of the city.

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY

The distinguished Greek Doric temple at the corner of The Mound and Princes St, its northern pediment crowned by a seated figure of Queen Victoria, is the home of the **Royal Scottish Academy** (RSA; Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 6671; www.royal.scottishacademy.org; The Mound; admission free, fee for special exhibitions; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun; ♿). Designed by William Playfair and built between 1823 and 1836, it was originally called the Royal Institution; the RSA took over the building in 1910. The galleries display a collection of paintings, sculptures and architectural drawings by academy members dating from 1831, and they also host temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

The RSA and the National Gallery of Scotland are linked via an underground mall – the Weston Link – which gives them twice the

UNDERGROUND EDINBURGH

As Edinburgh expanded in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, many old tenements were demolished and new bridges were built to link the Old Town to the newly built areas to its north and south. South Bridge (built between 1785 and 1788) and George IV Bridge (built between 1829 and 1834) lead southwards from the Royal Mile over the deep valley of Cowgate, but so many buildings have been built closely around them that you can hardly tell they are bridges – George IV Bridge has a total of nine arches but only two are visible; South Bridge has no less than 18 hidden arches.

These subterranean vaults were originally used as storerooms, workshops and drinking dens. But as early-19th-century Edinburgh's population was swelled by an influx of penniless Highlanders cleared from their lands, and Irish refugees from the potato famine, the dark, dripping chambers were given over to slum accommodation and abandoned to poverty, filth and crime.

The vaults were eventually cleared in the late 19th century, then lay forgotten until 1994 when the South Bridge vaults were opened to guided tours (see Mercat Tours, p96). Certain chambers are said to be haunted and one particular vault was investigated by paranormal researchers in 2001.

Nevertheless, the most ghoulish aspect of Edinburgh's hidden history dates from much earlier – from the plague that struck the city in 1645. Legend has it that the disease-ridden inhabitants of Mary King's Close (a lane on the northern side of the Royal Mile on the site of the City Chambers – you can still see its blocked-off northern end from Cockburn St) were walled up in their houses and left to perish. When the lifeless bodies were eventually cleared from the houses, they were so stiff that workmen had to hack off limbs to get them through the small doorways and narrow, twisting stairs.

From that day on, the close was said to be haunted by the spirits of the plague victims. The few people who were prepared to live there reported seeing apparitions of severed heads and limbs, and the largely abandoned close fell into ruin. When the Royal Exchange (now the City Chambers) was constructed between 1753 and 1761, it was built over the lower levels of Mary King's Close, which were left intact and sealed off beneath the building.

Interest in the close revived in the 20th century when Edinburgh's city council began to allow occasional guided tours to enter. Visitors have reported many supernatural experiences – the most famous ghost is 'Sarah', a little girl whose sad tale has prompted people to leave gifts of dolls in a corner of one of the rooms. In 2003 the close was opened to the public as the Real Mary King's Close (see p83).

temporary exhibition space of the Prado in Madrid and three times that of the Royal Academy in London, as well as housing cloakrooms, a lecture theatre and a restaurant. The galleries have become famous in recent years for 'blockbuster' exhibitions such as 'Monet: The Seine and the Sea', and 'The Age of Titian'.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

Immediately south of the RSA is the **National Gallery of Scotland** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 624 6200; www.nationalgalleries.org; The Mound; admission free, special exhibitions extra; ☎ 10am-5pm daily, to 7pm Thu; ♿). Also designed by William Playfair, this imposing classical building with its Ionic porticoes dates from the 1850s. Its octagonal rooms, lit by skylights, have been restored to their original Victorian décor of deep-green carpets and dark-red walls.

The gallery houses an important collection of European art from the Renaissance to postimpressionism, with works by Verrocchio (Leonardo da Vinci's teacher), Tintoretto, Titian, Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, Vermeer, El Greco, Poussin, Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Monet, Pissaro, Gauguin and Cézanne; each year in January the gallery exhibits its collection of Turner watercolours, bequeathed by Henry Vaughan in 1900.

Room XII is graced by Antonio Canova's white marble sculpture, *The Three Graces*; it is owned jointly with London's Victoria & Albert Museum, to which it will return in late 2008.

The upstairs galleries house portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Henry Raeburn, and a clutch of Impressionists including Monet's luminous *Haystacks*, Van Gogh's demonic *Olive Trees and Gauguin's* hallucinatory *Vision After the Sermon*. But the painting that really catches your eye is the gorgeous portrait of *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw* by John Singer Sargent.

The basement galleries dedicated to Scottish art include glowing portraits by Allan Ramsay and Sir Henry Raeburn, rural scenes by Sir David Wilkie and impressionistic landscapes by William MacTaggart. Look out for Raeburn's iconic *Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch*, and Sir George Harvey's hugely entertaining *A Schule Skailin* (A School Emptying) – a stern dominie (teacher) looks on as the boys stamper for the classroom door, one reaching for a spinning top confiscated earlier. Kids

will love the fantasy paintings of Sir Joseph Noel Paton in Room B5, incredibly detailed canvases crammed with hundreds of tiny fairies, goblins and elves.

GEORGE STREET & CHARLOTTE SQUARE

Until the 1990s George St – the major axis of New Town – was the centre of Edinburgh's financial industry, and Scotland's equivalent of Wall St. Now many of the big financial firms have moved to premises in the Exchange office district west of Lothian Rd, and George St's former banks and offices house upmarket shops, pubs and restaurants.

At the western end of George St is **Charlotte Square** (Map pp76-7), the architectural jewel of New Town, designed by Robert Adam shortly before his death in 1791. The northern side of the square is Adam's masterpiece and one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture anywhere. **Bute House** (Map pp76-7), in the centre at No 6, is the official residence of Scotland's first minister.

Next door is the **Georgian House** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 2160; 7 Charlotte Sq; adult/child £5/4; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, 11am-3pm Mar & Nov), which has been beautifully restored and furnished to show how Edinburgh's wealthy elite lived at the end of the 18th century. The walls are decorated with paintings by Allan Ramsay, Sir Henry Raeburn and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The headquarters of the **National Trust for Scotland** (NTS; Map pp76-7; ☎ 243 9300; www.nts.org.uk; 28 Charlotte Sq; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) is on the southern side of the square. As well as a shop, café and information desk, the building contains a restored 1820s **drawing room** (☎ 11am-3pm Mon-Fri) with Regency furniture and a collection of 20th-century Scottish paintings.

ST ANDREW SQUARE

Not as architecturally distinguished as its sister at the opposite end of George St, **St Andrew Square** (Map pp76-7) is dominated by the fluted column of the **Melville Monument** (Map pp76-7), commemorating Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (1742-1811). Dundas was the most powerful Scottish politician of his time, often referred to when alive as 'Harry IX, the Uncrowned King of Scotland'. The impressive Palladian mansion of **Dundas House** (Map pp76-7), built between 1772 and 1774, on the eastern side of the square, was built for Sir Laurence Dundas (1712-81) – no relation to

Viscount Melville. It has been the head office of the Royal Bank of Scotland since 1825 and has a spectacular domed banking hall dating from 1857 (you can nip inside for a look).

A short distance along George St is the **Church of St Andrew & St George** (Map pp76-7), built in 1784 with an unusual oval nave. It was the scene of the Disruption of 1843, when 451 dissenting ministers left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church.

Just north of the square at the junction with Queen St is the Venetian Gothic palace of the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 624 6200; www.nationalgalleries.org; 1 Queen St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm daily, to 7pm Thu). Its galleries illustrate Scottish history through portraits and sculptures of famous Scottish personalities, from Robert Burns and Bonnie Prince Charlie to Sean Connery and Billy Connolly. Opening hours are extended during the Edinburgh Festival.

Calton Hill

Calton Hill (100m), rising dramatically above the eastern end of Princes St, is Edinburgh's acropolis, its summit scattered with grandiose memorials mostly dating from the first half of the 19th century. It is also one of the best viewpoints in Edinburgh, with a panorama that takes in the castle, Holyrood, Arthur's Seat, the Firth of Forth, New Town and the full length of Princes St.

On the southern side of the hill, on Regent Rd, is the modernist façade of **St Andrew's House** (Map pp76-7), built between 1936 and 1939, which housed the civil servants of the Westminster government's Scottish Office until they were moved to the new Scottish Executive building in Leith in 1996.

Just beyond St Andrew's House and on the opposite side of the road is the imposing **Royal High School** (Map pp76-7) building, dating from 1829 and modelled on the Temple of Theseus in Athens. Former pupils include Robert Adam, Alexander Graham Bell and Sir Walter Scott. It now stands empty. To its east, on the other side of Regent Rd, is the 1830 **Burns Monument** (Map pp72-3), a Greek-style memorial to Robert Burns.

You can reach the summit of Calton Hill via the road beside the Royal High School or by the stairs at the eastern end of Waterloo Pl. The largest structure on the summit is the **National Monument** (Map pp76-7), an over-ambitious attempt to replicate the Parthenon

and intended to honour Scotland's dead in the Napoleonic Wars. Construction – paid for by public subscription – began in 1822, but funds ran dry when only 12 columns were complete.

Looking a bit like an upturned telescope – the similarity is intentional – and offering even better views, the **Nelson Monument** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 2716; Calton Hill; admission £3; ☎ 1-6pm Mon, 10am-6pm Tue-Sat Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Mon-Sat Oct-Mar) was built to commemorate Admiral Lord Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in 1805.

The design of the **City Observatory** (Map pp76-7), built in 1818, was based on the ancient Greek Temple of the Winds in Athens. Its original function was to provide a precise, astronomical time-keeping service for marine navigators, but smoke from Waverley train station forced the astronomers to move to Blackford Hill in the south of Edinburgh in 1895.

Dean Village

If you follow Queensferry St northwards from the western end of Princes St, you come to **Dean Bridge** (Map pp72-3), designed by Thomas Telford and built between 1829 and 1832. Down in the valley just west of the bridge is Dean Village (from 'dene', a Scots word for valley). It was founded as a milling community by the canons of Holyrood Abbey in the 12th century and by 1700 there were 11 water mills here operated by the Incorporation of Baxters (the bakers' trade guild). One of the old mill buildings has been converted into flats, and the village is now an attractive residential area.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART & DEAN GALLERY

Set in an impressive neoclassical building surrounded by a landscaped sculpture park some 500m west of Dean Village is the **Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 624 6200; www.nationalgalleries.org; 75 Belford Rd; admission free, fee for special exhibitions; ☎ 10am-5pm). The collection concentrates on 20th-century art, with various European movements represented by the likes of Matisse, Picasso, Kirchner, Magritte, Miró, Mondrian and Giacometti. American and English artists are also represented, but most space is given to Scottish painters – from the Scottish colourists of the early 20th century to contemporary artists such as Peter Howson and Ken Currie. There's an excellent café downstairs, and the surrounding park features

sculptures by Henry Moore, Rachel Whiteread and Barbara Hepworth among others, as well as a 'landform artwork' by Charles Jencks.

Directly across Belford Rd from the National Gallery of Modern Art, another neo-classical mansion houses its annexe, the **Dean Gallery** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 624 6200; 73 Belford Rd; admission free, special exhibitions extra; ☹ 10am-5pm). The Dean holds the Gallery of Modern Art's collection of Dada and surrealist art, including works by Dali, Giacometti and Picasso, and a large collection of sculpture and graphic art created by the Edinburgh-born sculptor Sir Eduardo Paolozzi.

Leith

Two miles northeast of the city centre, Leith (Map p71) has been Edinburgh's seaport since the 14th century and remained an independent burgh with its own town council until it was incorporated by the city in the 1920s. Like many of Britain's dockland areas, it fell into decay in the decades following WWII but has been undergoing a revival since the late 1980s. Old warehouses have been turned into luxury flats, and a lush crop of trendy bars and restaurants has sprouted along the waterfront. The area was given an additional boost in the late 1990s when the Scottish Executive (a government department) moved to a new building on Leith docks. The city council has now formulated a major redevelopment plan for the entire Edinburgh waterfront from Leith to Granton, the first phase of which is **Ocean Terminal** (Map p71), a shopping and leisure complex that includes the former Royal Yacht *Britannia* and a berth for visiting cruise liners. Parts of Leith are still a bit rough but it's a distinctive corner of the city and well worth exploring.

One of Scotland's biggest tourist attractions is the former **Royal Yacht Britannia** (Map p71; ☎ 555 5566; www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk; Ocean Terminal, Leith; adult/child £9.50/5.50; ☹ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct-Mar, last admission 1½hr before closing; ⚓). She was the British royal family's floating home during their foreign travels from the time of her launch in 1953 until her decommissioning in 1997, and is now moored permanently in front of Ocean Terminal.

The tour, which you take at your own pace with an audio guide (available in 20 languages), gives an intriguing insight into the Queen's private tastes – *Britannia* was one of the few places where the royal family could enjoy true privacy. The entire ship is a

monument to 1950s' décor and technology, and the accommodation reveals Her Majesty's preference for simple, unfussy surroundings – the Queen's own bed is surprisingly tiny and plain.

There was nothing simple or unfussy, however, about the running of the ship. When the Queen travelled, along with her went 45 members of the royal household, five tons of luggage and a Rolls-Royce that was carefully squeezed into a specially built garage on the deck. The ship's company consisted of an admiral, 20 officers and 220 yachtsmen. The decks (of Burmese teak) were scrubbed daily, but all work near the royal accommodation was carried out in complete silence and had to be finished by 8am. A thermometer was kept in the Queen's bathroom to make sure that the water was the correct temperature, and when in harbour one yachtsman was charged with ensuring that the angle of the gangway never exceeded 12 degrees. And note the mahogany windbreak that was added to the balcony deck in front of the bridge. It was put there to stop wayward breezes from blowing up skirts and inadvertently revealing the royal undies.

The Majestic Tour bus (see p96) runs from Waverley Bridge to *Britannia* during opening times. Alternatively, take Lothian Bus 1, 11, 22, 34, 35 or 36 to Ocean Terminal.

Greater Edinburgh CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE

If you want to explore a Scottish fortress away from the crowds that throng Edinburgh Castle, try **Craigmillar Castle** (Map p71; ☎ 661 4445; Craigmillar Castle Rd; adult/child £4/2; ☹ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4.30pm Sat-Wed Oct-Mar). Dating from the 15th century, the tower house rises above two sets of machicolated curtain walls. Mary, Queen of Scots took refuge here after the murder of Rizzio; it was here too that plans to murder her husband Darnley were laid. Look for the prison cell complete with built-in sanitation, something some 'modern' British prisons only finally managed in 1996.

The castle is 2.5 miles southeast of the city centre. Take bus 33 eastbound from Princes St to Old Dalkeith Rd and walk 500m up Craigmillar Castle Rd.

CRAMOND

With its moored yachts, stately swans and whitewashed houses spilling down the hill side at the mouth of the River Almond, Cramond is

the most picturesque corner of Edinburgh. It is also rich in history. The Romans built a fort here in the 2nd century AD (the village's name comes from Caer Amon, 'the fort on the River Almond'), but recent archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of a Bronze Age settlement dating from 8500 BC, the oldest known site in the whole of Scotland.

Cramond, which was originally a mill village, has a historic 17th-century church and a 15th-century tower house, as well as some rather unimpressive Roman remains, but most people come to enjoy the walks along the river to the ruined mills and to stroll along the seafront. On the riverside, opposite the cottage on the far bank, is the **Maltings** (☎ 312 6034; Cramond Village; admission free; ☹ 2-5pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, daily during Edinburgh Festival), which hosts an interesting exhibition on Cramond's history.

Cramond is 5 miles northwest of the city centre; take bus 41 from The Mound, Princes St (west bound) or Queensferry St to Cramond Glebe Rd, then walk north for 400m.

EDINBURGH ZOO

Opened in 1913, **Edinburgh Zoo** (Map p71; ☎ 334 9171; www.edinburghzoo.org.uk; 134 Corstorphine Rd; adult/child £10.50/7.50; ☹ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct & Mar, 9am-4.30pm Nov-Feb; ⚓) is one of the world's leading conservation zoos. Edinburgh's captive breeding programme has saved many endangered species, including Siberian tigers, pygmy hippos and red pandas. The main attractions are the penguins (kept in the world's biggest penguin pool), the sea lion and red panda feeding times (check the website for details), the animal-handling sessions and the Lifelinks 'hands-on' zoology centre.

The zoo is 2.5 miles west of the city centre; take Lothian Bus 12, 26 or 31, First Bus 16, 18, 80 or 86, or the Airlink Bus 100 westbound from Princes St.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN

Just north of Stockbridge is the lovely **Royal Botanic Garden** (Map p71; ☎ 552 7171; www.rbge.org.uk; 20a Inverleith Row; admission to gardens free, to glasshouses £3.50; ☹ 10am-7pm Apr-Sep, 10am-6pm Mar & Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Feb). Twenty-eight beautifully landscaped hectares include splendid Victorian palm houses, colourful swathes of rhododendron and azalea, and a world-famous rock garden. The Terrace Café offers good views towards the city centre. Take Lothian Bus 8, 17, 23 or 27 to the East Gate, or the Majestic Tour bus (see p96).

ACTIVITIES Walking

Edinburgh is lucky to have several good walking areas within the city boundary, including Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill, Blackford Hill, Hermitage of Braid, Corstorphine Hill, and the coast and river at Cramond. The **Pentland Hills**, which rise to over 500m, stretch south-west from the city for 15 miles, offering excellent high- and low-level walking.

You can follow the **Water of Leith Walkway** from the city centre to Balerno (8 miles), and continue across the Pentlands to Silverburn (6.5 miles) or Carlops (8 miles), and return to Edinburgh by bus. Another good walk is along the towpath of the **Union Canal**, which begins in Fountainbridge and runs all the way to Falkirk (31 miles). You can return to Edinburgh by bus at Ratho (8.5 miles) or Broxburn (12 miles), and by bus or train from Linlithgow (21 miles).

Cycling

Edinburgh and its surroundings offer many excellent opportunities for cycling. The main off-road routes from the city centre out to the countryside follow the Union Canal towpath and the Water of Leith Walkway from Tollcross southwards to Balerno (7.5 miles) on the edge of the Pentland Hills, and the Innocent Railway Cycle Path from the southern side of Arthur's Seat eastwards to Musselburgh (5 miles) and on to Ormiston and Pencaitland. There are several routes through the Pentland Hills that are suitable for mountain bikes. For details ask at any bike shop or contact the **Pentland Hills Ranger Service** (☎ 445 3383). The *Edinburgh City Bike Map* (available from cycle shops) shows all the city's cycle routes.

The friendly and helpful folk at **Edinburgh Cycle Hire & Scottish Cycle Safaris** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 5560; www.cyclescotland.co.uk; 29 Blackfriars St; per day £10-15, per week £50-70; ☹ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat) rent out top-quality bikes; rates include helmet, lock and repair kit. You can hire tents and touring equipment too. The company also organises cycle tours in Edinburgh and all over Scotland – check the website for details.

Golf

There are no fewer than 19 golf courses in Edinburgh – the following are two of the best city courses.

Braid Hills Public Golf Course (☎ 447 6666; Braid Hills Approach; green fees weekday/weekend £18.50/23) A scenic but challenging course to the south of the city centre.

Lothianburn Golf Course (☎ 445 2288; 106a Biggar Rd, Fairmilehead; green fees weekday/weekend £20/25) Enjoys a scenic setting at the foot of the Pentland Hills, south of the city.

Swimming

The Firth of Forth is a bit on the chilly side for enjoyable swimming, but there are several indoor alternatives. The **Royal Commonwealth Pool** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 7211; 21 Dalkeith Rd; adult/child £4.20/1.80; ☎ 6am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4.30pm Sat & Sun, closed 9-10am Wed) is Edinburgh's main facility, with a 50m pool, diving pool, children's pool, flumes and fitness centre.

Water Sports

The sheltered waters of the Firth of Forth host all kinds of water sports. **Port Edgar Marina & Sailing School** (☎ 331 3330; www.edinburghleisure.co.uk; Shore Rd, Queensferry; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Apr-Oct, 9am-4.30pm Nov-Mar) offers a wide range of courses in sailing, canoeing and power-boating.

Horse Riding

There are many scenic bridle paths suitable for horse riding in the countryside around

Edinburgh, and a number of riding schools offer two- and three-hour treks as well as tuition, including **Tower Farm Riding Stables** (☎ 664 3375; www.towerfarm.org; 85 Liberton Dr; per hr £23) in the south of the city.

WALKING TOUR

Edinburgh's Old Town stretches along the Royal Mile to the east of the castle and south to the Grassmarket and Cowgate. This walk explores a few of the many interesting nooks and crannies around the upper part of the Royal Mile, and involves a fair bit of climbing up and down steep stairs and closes. Allow one to two hours.

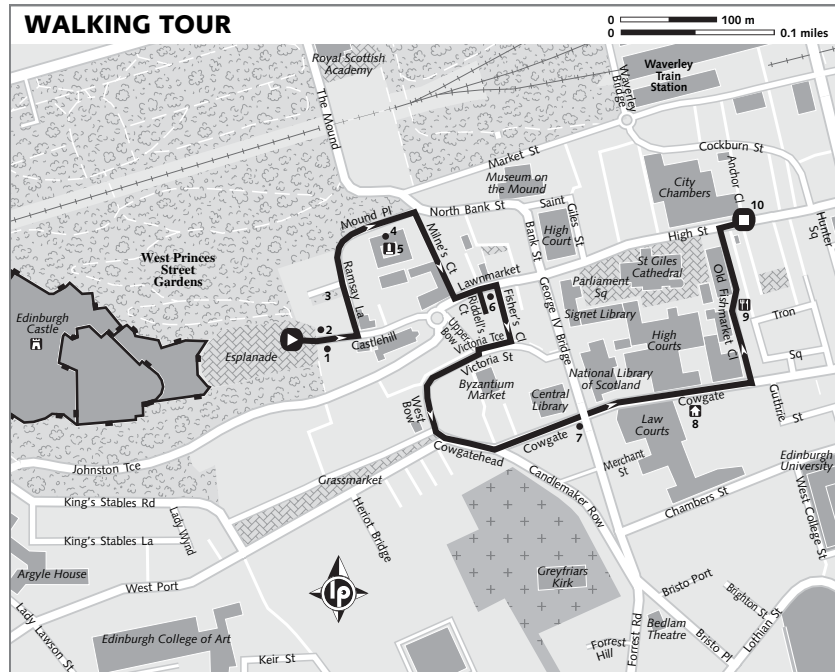
Begin at Castlehill and the start of the Royal Mile. The 17th-century house on the right, above the steps of North Castle Wynd, is known as **Cannonball House (1)** because of the iron ball lodged in the wall (look between,

WALK FACTS

Distance: 0.75 miles

Duration: one to two hours

WALKING TOUR



and slightly below, the two largest windows). It was not fired in anger, but instead marks the gravitation height to which water would flow naturally from the city's first piped water supply.

The low, rectangular building across the street (now a touristy tartan-weaving mill) was originally the reservoir that held the Old Town's water supply. On its west wall is the **Witches Well (2)**, where a modern bronze fountain commemorates around 4000 people (mostly women) who were burned or strangled in Edinburgh between 1479 and 1722 for suspicion of witchcraft.

Go past the reservoir and turn left down Ramsay Lane, and take a look at **Ramsay Garden (3)** – one of the most desirable addresses in Edinburgh – where late-19th-century apartments were built around the nucleus of the octagonal Ramsay Lodge, once home to poet Allan Ramsay. The cobbled street continues around to the right below student residences, to the twin towers of the **New College (4)** – home to Edinburgh University's Faculty of Divinity. Nip into the courtyard to see the **statue of John Knox (5)**.

Just past New College turn right and climb up the stairs into Milne's Ct, a student residence. Exit into Lawnmarket, cross the street (bearing slightly left) and duck into **Riddell's Court (6)** at No 322–328, a typical Old Town close. You'll find yourself in a small courtyard, but the house in front of you (built in 1590) was originally the edge of the street (the building you just walked under was added in 1726; check the doorway on the right). The arch with the inscription *Vivendo discimus* ('we live and learn') leads into the original 16th-century courtyard.

Go back into the street, turn right, and then right again down Fisher's Close, which ejects you onto the delightful Victoria Terrace, poised above the cobbled curve of Victoria St. Wander right, enjoying the view, then descend the stairs at the foot of Upper Bow and continue downhill to the Grassmarket. Turn left along the gloomy defile of the Cowgate. The first bridge you come to is **George IV Bridge (7)**; built 1829–34). Although you can see only one arch here, there are nine in total – one more is visible a block south at Merchant St, but the rest are hidden beneath and between the surrounding buildings, as are the haunted vaults of South Bridge, further west along Cowgate.

Pass under George IV Bridge. The buildings to your right are the new Law Courts, while high up to the left you can see the complex of buildings behind Parliament Sq. Past the courts and on the right is **Tailors Hall (8)**; built 1621, extended 1757), now a hotel and bar, but formerly the meeting place of the 'Companie of Tailzeours' (Tailors' Guild).

Turn left and climb up Old Fishmarket Close, and perhaps stop for lunch at the brasserie **Café Marlayne (9)**; p102). Emerge once more into the Royal Mile. Across the street and slightly downhill on the left is **Anchor Close (10)**, named for a tavern that once stood there. It hosted the Crochallan Fencibles, an 18th-century drinking club that provided its patrons with an agreeable blend of intellectual debate and intoxicating liquor. The club was founded by William Smellie, editor of the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; its best-known member was Robert Burns, the poet.

Should you wish to wet your own whistle, more than a dozen hostelrys lie between here and Holyrood. And it's downhill all the way...

EDINBURGH FOR CHILDREN

Edinburgh has a multitude of attractions for children, and most things to see and do are child-friendly. Kids under five travel for free on Edinburgh buses, and five- to 15-year-olds pay a flat fare of 60p. However, you should be aware that the majority of Scottish pubs, even those that serve bar meals, are forbidden by law to admit children under the age of 14; even in the family-friendly pubs (ie those in possession of a Children's Certificate), under-14s are only admitted between the hours of 11am and 8pm, and only when accompanied by an adult aged 18 or over.

The Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (p79) has lots of info on children's events, and the handy guidebook *Edinburgh for Under Fives* can be found in most bookshops. The *List* magazine (www.list.co.uk) has a special Kids section listing children's activities and events in and around Edinburgh. The week-long **Children's International Theatre Festival** (☎ 225 8050; www.imagine.org.uk) takes place each year in late May/early June.

There are good, safe **playgrounds** in most Edinburgh parks, including Princes Street Gardens West, Inverleith Park (opposite the Royal Botanic Garden), George V Park (New Town), the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links.

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE

Adam Lyal (deceased) – aka Andrew Henderson – is the ghost of an Edinburgh highwayman who was hanged at the Tolbooth in 1811, and a tour leader with Cadies & Witchery Tours (p96).

Edinburgh is famous for its grisly past. What makes the city such a good place for a ghost to, er, live? I would have to say it's the tremendous richness of history in this city. The stories alone are impressive, but the physical presence of the past is overwhelming. There are buildings in Edinburgh which are 400 to 500 years old, still standing in their original forms! You can walk around the Old Town and get a feel for a real medieval city with its narrow alleyways and wynds. On the other hand, you could pop over to the New Town and enjoy the more 'modern' Georgian world (it's only 300 years old, so there aren't quite so many ghosts there!). History is everywhere you look in Edinburgh, so it's pretty easy to understand why it would be so thoroughly haunted!

Where are you most likely to meet a ghost (apart from one of your tours)? Historically speaking, the largest number of hauntings is concentrated in just one street, the West Bow (which is now part of Victoria St, near the Grassmarket). Even more remarkably, they're all down to just one man, the Wizard of the West Bow, Major Thomas Weir. He was a self-confessed sorcerer, whose evil was apparently so intense that after his death the area around his home was the site of regular (sometimes nightly) supernatural occurrences for over 250 years! It's a little quieter now, but overall, it's still the best place to look!

What are Edinburgh's spookiest places? My favourite spooky places in Edinburgh are probably the graveyards, though I would hesitate to recommend that anyone go to visit them at night! The best are probably those around St John's and St Cuthbert's churches on the corner of Lothian Rd and Princes St, though the spookiest by far is undoubtedly the Old Calton Burial Ground on Waterloo Rd, home to such departed notables as philosopher David Hume.

Where would a hard-working ghoul go to slake his thirst at the end (or beginning) of an evening's haunting? It might be expected that we'd be found in one of those expensive theme pubs where they hang rubber skeletons on the walls and spray you with cobwebs when you enter, but no! We at the Cadies still subscribe to the ancient and unofficial motto of our trade: 'Poor but Honest' (or at least the former, if not the latter). Therefore we tend to do our carousing in some of the Old Town's marvellous little howffs, such as the Jolly Judge (p107) or the Last Drop (p107), named after the nearby gallows in the Grassmarket. Of course, when we've been walking the streets all night proximity is a virtue, and we can often be found in the Bow Bar (p107) just two doors up from our shop, which is very cosy, extremely friendly and stocks a greater array of whiskies than you could hope to find anywhere else!

Can you recommend any good 'off-the-beaten-track' place to go/things to do in Edinburgh? The wonderful thing about Edinburgh's Old Town is that so much of it is 'off the beaten track'! One of my favourite venues would have to be Whistle Binkie's (p109). It's quite hard to spot, being located under the actual street with only a doorway on the pavement leading down, but it's well worth finding. Of course, there are other tours in Edinburgh, and the one I'd recommend to anyone is the Literary Pub Tour (p96). Booze, history and Scottish literature? It's a work of genius!

Some more ideas for outdoor activities include exploring the **Royal Botanic Garden** (p91), going to see the animals at **Edinburgh Zoo** (p91), visiting the statue of **Greyfriars Bobby** (p85) and feeding the swans and playing on the beach at **Cramond** (p90). During the Ed-

inburgh and Fringe Festivals there is also plenty of street theatre for kids, especially on the High St and at the foot of The Mound, and in December there's an open-air ice rink and fairground rides in Princes Street Gardens.

If it's raining, you can visit the Discovery Centre, a hands-on activity zone on Level 3 of the **Museum of Scotland** (p86), play on the flumes at the **Royal Commonwealth Pool** (p92), try out the earthquake simulator at **Our Dynamic Earth** (p84), or take a tour of the haunted **Real Mary King's Close** (p83).

Childminding Services

For full listings of government-approved childminding services, check out **Childcare Link** (www.childcarelink.gov.uk), or **City of Edinburgh Childcare Information Service** (☎ 0800 032 0323). The following are reliable Edinburgh agencies that charge from £6 an hour for babysitting: **Family Circle Care** (☎ 554 9500; www.familycircles.org; 22 Tower St, Leith) **Panda's Nanny Agency** (☎ 663 3967; www.pandasnannyagency.co.uk; 22 Durham Pl, Bonnyrigg)

QUIRKY EDINBURGH

Edinburgh is full of unusual attractions and out-of-the-way corners that most visitors never see – even though they may be standing just a few metres away. Here are a few of the city's less mainstream attractions.

In complete contrast to the austerity of most of Edinburgh's religious buildings, the 19th-century, neo-Romanesque **Mansfield Place Church** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 474 8033; www.mansfieldtraquair.org.uk; Mansfield Pl; ☼) 1-4pm 2nd Sun of the month, 11am-1pm Sun-Thu during Edinburgh Festival Fringe) at the foot of Broughton St contains a remarkable series of Renaissance-style frescoes painted in the 1890s by Irish-born artist Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852-1936). Now undergoing restoration, the murals are on view to the public at certain times (check the website for any changes).

The **Museum on the Mound** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 529 1288; The Mound; admission free; ☼) 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 1-5pm Sat & Sun), housed in the Bank of Scotland's splendid Georgian HQ, is a treasure trove of gold coins, bullion chests, safes, banknotes, forgeries, cartoons and lots of fascinating old documents and photographs charting the history of Scotland's oldest bank.

Musicians will enjoy the **Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 650 2423; Reid Concert Hall, Teviot Pl; admission free; ☼) 3-5pm Wed, 10am-1pm Sat year-round, 2-5pm Mon-Fri during Edinburgh Festival), which contains more than 1000 instruments ranging from a 400-year-old lute to a 1959 synthesiser.

Further off the beaten track are the **Surgeons' Hall Museums** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 527 1649; [.ac.uk; Nicolson St; adult/child £5/3; ☼\) noon-4pm Mon-Fri\). The **History of Surgery Museum** is a fascinating look at surgery in Scotland from the 15th century – when barbers supplemented their income with blood-letting, amputations and other surgical procedures – to the present day. The highlight is the exhibit on Burke and Hare, which includes Burke's death mask and a pocket book bound in his skin. Covering dentistry, with its wince-inducing collections of extraction tools, is the adjacent **Menzies Campbell Dental Museum**. The **Pathology Museum** houses a gruesome but compelling 19th-century collection of diseased organs and massive tumours pickled in formaldehyde.](http://www.rcsed</p>
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While ghost tours of Edinburgh's underground vaults and haunted graveyards have become a mainstream attraction, few tourists have yet explored **Gilmerton Cove** (☎ 557 6464; www.gilmertoncove.org.uk; 16 Drum St, Gilmerton; adult/child £5/3; ☼) tours 10am-5pm Sat, 7pm Wed, Sat & Sun). Hidden in the southern suburbs, the mysterious cove is a series of manmade subterranean caverns hacked out of the rock, their origin and function unknown. Book through Mercat Tours (see p96).

Another refreshing alternative to the mainstream walking tours is offered by **Celtic Trails** (☎ 448 2869; www.celtictrails.co.uk; tours £25-49), whose knowledgeable owner Jackie Queally leads guided tours of Edinburgh's ancient and sacred sites, covering subjects such as Celtic mythology, geomancy, sacred geometry and the Knights Templar.

And finally, if you're in Edinburgh on the first Friday of August, head west to the village of Queensferry (p114) to see the bizarre **Burry Man**. As part of the village gala day, a local man spends nine hours roaming the streets wearing a woolly suit, which has been laboriously covered from head to toe in big, green, prickly burrs. One glance at his costume – he looks like a child's drawing of a Martian, with added prickles – would make you think he's suffering a medieval punishment, but it's actually a great honour to be selected.

TOURS Bus Tours

Open-topped buses leave from Waverley Bridge outside the main train station and offer hop-on, hop-off tours of the main sights, taking in New Town, the Grassmarket and the Royal Mile. They're a good way to get your bearings, although with a bus map and a Day Saver bus

ticket (£2.50) you could do much the same thing but without the commentary. Tours run daily, year-round, except for 24 and 25 December.

Tickets for the following three tours remain valid for 24 hours.

Edinburgh Tour (☎ 555 6363; adult/child £9/3)

Lothian Buses' bright red buses depart every 20 minutes from Waverley Bridge.

Mac Tours (☎ 220 0770; adult/child £9/3) Offers similar tours to Edinburgh Tour, but in a vintage bus.

Majestic Tour (☎ 220 0770; adult/child £9/3) Runs every 30 minutes (every 20 minutes in July and August) from Waverley Bridge to the Royal Yacht *Britannia* at Ocean Terminal via the Royal Botanic Garden and Newhaven, returning via Leith Walk, Holyrood and the Royal Mile.

Walking Tours

There are plenty of organised walks around Edinburgh, many of them related to ghosts, murders and witches. For starting times of individual walks, phone or check the following websites:

Black Hart Storytellers (☎ 225 9044; www.blackhart.uk.com; adult/concession £8.50/6.50) Not suitable for young children. The 'City of the Dead' tour of Greyfriars Kirkyard is probably the best of Edinburgh's 'ghost' tours. Many people have reported encounters with the 'McKenzie Poltergeist'.

Cadies & Witchery Tours (☎ 225 6745; www.witcherytours.com; adult/child £7.50/5) The becloaked and pasty-faced Adam Lyal (deceased) leads a 'Murder & Mystery' tour of the Old Town's darker corners. These tours are famous for their 'jumper-ooters' – costumed actors who 'jump oot' when you least expect it. Ooooh, scary.

Edinburgh Literary Pub Tour (☎ 226 6665; www.edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk; adult/student £9/7) An enlightening two-hour trawl through Edinburgh's literary history – and its associated howffs – in the entertaining company of Messrs Clart and McBrain. One of the best of Edinburgh's walking tours.

Mercat Tours (☎ 557 6464; www.mercattours.com; adult/child £8.50/5) Mercat offers a wide range of fascinating tours including history walks in the Old Town and Leith, 'Ghosts & Ghouls' tours and visits to haunted underground vaults.

Trainspotting Tours (☎ 555 2500; www.leithwalks.co.uk; per person £7) A tour of locations from Irvine Welsh's notorious novel *Trainspotting*, delivered with wit and enthusiasm.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Edinburgh hosts an amazing number of festivals throughout the year, notably the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and the Military Tattoo, which are all held around the same time in August (see the boxed text, opposite). Hogmanay, Scottish New Year's celebrations, is also a peak party time; see the boxed text, below.

April

Edinburgh International Science Festival (☎ 558 7666; www.sciencefestival.co.uk) First held in 1987, it hosts a wide range of events, including talks, lectures, exhibitions, demonstrations, guided tours and interactive experiments designed to stimulate, inspire and challenge. From dinosaurs to ghosts to alien life forms, there's something to interest everyone. The festival runs over 10 days at the beginning of April.

May

Scottish International Children's Festival (☎ 225 6440; www.imaginate.org.uk) This is Britain's biggest festival of performing arts for children, with events suitable for kids from three to 12. Groups from around the world perform classic tales like *Hansel and Gretel* as well as new material written specially for children. The festival takes place annually in the last week of May.

EDINBURGH'S HOGMANAY

Traditionally, the New Year has always been a more important celebration for Scots than Christmas. In towns, cities and villages all over the country, people fill the streets at midnight on 31 December to wish each other a Guid New Year and, yes, to knock back a dram or six to keep the cold at bay.

In 1993 Edinburgh's city council had the excellent idea of spicing up Hogmanay by organising some events, laying on some live music in Princes St and issuing an open invitation to the rest of the world. Most of them turned up, or so it seemed, and had such a good time that they told all their pals and came back again the next year. Now **Edinburgh's Hogmanay** (☎ 529 3914; www.edinburghshogmanay.com) is the biggest winter festival in Europe, regularly pulling in more than 250,000 partying punters. Events run from 29 December to 1 January, and include a torchlight procession, huge street party and a New Year's Day triathlon. To get into the main party area in the city centre after 8pm on 31 December you'll need a ticket – book well in advance.

FESTIVAL CITY

August in Edinburgh sees a frenzy of festivals, with half a dozen world-class events running at the same time.

The month kicks off with the **Edinburgh Military Tattoo** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 0870 755 5118; www.edintattoo.co.uk; Tattoo Office, 32 Market St), a spectacular display of military marching bands, massed pipes and drums, acrobats, cheerleaders and motorcycle display teams, all played out in front of the magnificent backdrop of the floodlit castle. Each show traditionally finishes with a lone piper, dramatically lit, playing a lament on the battlements. The Tattoo takes place over the first three weeks of August (from a Friday to a Saturday); there's one show at 9pm Monday to Friday and two (at 7.30pm and 10.30pm) on Saturday, but no performance on Sunday.

First held in 1947 to mark a return to peace after the ordeal of WWII, the **Edinburgh International Festival** (☎ 473 2099; www.eif.co.uk) is festooned with superlatives – the oldest, the biggest, the most famous, the best in the world. The original was a modest affair, but today hundreds of the world's top musicians and performers congregate in Edinburgh for three weeks of diverse and inspirational music, opera, theatre and dance.

Tickets for popular events – especially music and opera – sell out quickly, so it's best to book as far in advance as possible. You can buy tickets in person at the Hub (Map pp76-7), or by phone, fax or internet. Edinburgh's annual culture-fest takes place over the three weeks ending on the first Saturday in September; the programme is usually available from April.

When the first Edinburgh Festival was held in 1947, there were eight theatre companies who didn't make it onto the main programme. Undeterred, they grouped together and held their own minifestival, on the fringe, and an Edinburgh institution was born. Today the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 0026; www.edfringe.com; Edinburgh Festival Fringe Office, 180 High St) is the biggest festival of the performing arts anywhere in the world.

Since 1990 the Fringe has been dominated by stand-up comedy, but the sheer variety of shows on offer is staggering – everything from chain-saw juggling to performance poetry to Tibetan yak-milk garbling. So how do you decide what to see? There are daily reviews in the *Scotsman* newspaper – one good *Scotsman* review and a show sells out in hours – but the best recommendation is word of mouth. If you have the time, go to at least one unknown show – it may be crap, but at least you'll have your obligatory 'worst show I ever saw' story.

The big names play at the megavenues like the **Assembly Rooms** (☎ 220 4348; www.assemblyroomsedinburgh.co.uk; 54 George St) and the **Pleasance** (☎ 556 6550; www.pleasance.co.uk/edinburgh; 60 Pleasance), and charge megaprices (£10 a ticket and more, with one famous comic notoriously charging £37.50 in 2007), but there are plenty of good shows in the £5 to £7 range and, best of all, lots of free stuff. Fringe Sunday – usually the second Sunday – is a smorgasbord of free performances, staged in the Meadows park to the south of the city centre.

The Fringe take place over 3½ weeks in August, the last two weeks overlapping with the first two of the Edinburgh International Festival.

Held in a little village of marquees in the middle of Charlotte Sq, the **Edinburgh International Book Festival** (☎ 228 5444; www.edbookfest.co.uk) is a fun fortnight of talks, readings, debates, lectures, book signings and meet-the-author events, with a café and tented bookshop thrown in. The festival lasts for two weeks in August (usually the first two weeks of the Edinburgh International Festival).

June

Scottish Traditional Beer Festival (www.camra.org.uk; Assembly Rooms, 54 George St) A celebration of all things fermented and yeasty, Scotland's biggest beer-fest gives you the opportunity to sample a wide range of traditionally brewed beers from Scotland and around the world. Froth-topped bliss. The festival is held on the second weekend in June.

Royal Highland Show (☎ 335 6200; www.royalhighlandshow.org; Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston)

Scotland's hugely popular national agricultural show is a four-day feast of all things rural, with everything from show-jumping and tractor-driving to sheep-shearing and falconry. Countless pens are filled with coiffed show-cattle and pedicured prize-ewes. The show is held over a long weekend (Thursday to Sunday) in late June.

Edinburgh International Film Festival (☎ 229 2550; www.edfilmfest.org.uk) One of the original Edinburgh Festival trinity, having first been staged in 1947 along with the International Festival and the Fringe, the

two-week film festival moved its dates from August to June starting in 2008. It is a major international event, serving as a showcase for new British and European films, and staging the European premieres of one or two Hollywood blockbusters.

July

Edinburgh International Jazz & Blues Festival

(☎ 467 5200; www.edinburghjazzfestival.co.uk) Held annually since 1978, the Jazz & Blues Festival pulls in top talent from all over the world. The festival runs for nine days, beginning on the last Friday in July (the week before the Fringe and Tattoo begin). The first weekend sees a Mardi Gras street parade on Saturday from the City Chambers, up the Royal Mile and down Victoria St into the Grassmarket, for an afternoon of free, open-air music. On the Sunday there's a series of free concerts at the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens.

August

See the boxed text, p97, for details of August's festivals.

December

Edinburgh's Christmas (☎ 529 3914; www.edinburghchristmas.com) The newest of the Scottish capital's festivals, first held in 2000, the Christmas bash includes a big street parade, a fairground and Ferris wheel, and an open-air ice rink in Princes Street Gardens. The celebrations are held over the three weeks before Christmas.

Edinburgh's Hogmanay See boxed text, p96.

SLEEPING

A boom in hotel building has seen Edinburgh's tourist capacity swell significantly in the last decade, but you can guarantee that the city will still be packed to the gills during the festival period (August) and over Hogmanay (New Year). If you want a room during these periods, book as far in advance as possible – a year ahead if possible. In general, it's best to book ahead for accommodation at Easter and from mid-May to mid-September.

Hotels and backpacker hostels are found throughout the Old and New Towns, while midrange B&Bs and guesthouses are concentrated outside the centre in the suburbs of Tollcross, Bruntsfield, Newington and Pilrig.

If you're driving, don't even think about staying in the city centre unless your hotel has its own private car park – parking in the centre is a nightmare. Instead, look for somewhere in a suburb like Newington, where there's a chance of finding free, on-street parking (even then, don't bet on getting a parking space

outside the front door). Alternatively, stay outside the city and travel in by bus or train.

Edinburgh accommodation is slightly more expensive than in the rest of Scotland, so the price breakdown in these listings is different from that described on p436 – budget is less than £30, midrange £30 to £60, and top end is more than £60, based on the cost per person for bed and breakfast (B&B), sharing a double room (or for a single dorm bed in a hostel).

Accommodation Agencies

If you arrive in Edinburgh without a room, the Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (p79) booking service will try to find a room to suit you (and will charge a £5 fee if successful). If you have the time, pick up the tourist office's accommodation brochure and ring around yourself.

You can also try VisitScotland's **Booking Hotline** (☎ 0845 225 5121), which has a £3 surcharge; or search for accommodation on the **Edinburgh & Lothians Tourist Board** (www.edinburgh.org/accom) website.

Budget

There are plenty of independent backpacker hostels in Edinburgh, many of them right in the centre of town. Most have 24-hour access and no curfew.

OLD TOWN & AROUND

Brodies Hostel (☎ 556 2223; www.brodieshostels.co.uk; Brodies Hostel 1 Map pp76-7; 12 High St; dm £9-22; ☎; ☒; ☑) Brodies Hostel 2 (Map pp76-7; 93 High St; dm £9-22, d £35-62; ☎) Brodies 1 is a small (50-bed), friendly place with four dorms (three mixed and one women-only) and seriously comfy hotel-quality mattresses and duvets. It has a kitchen and a cosy lounge area with a fireplace and no TV, which makes for good socialising. The newer Brodies 2, up the hill at 93 High St, offers double and family rooms too. Both have top locations bang in the middle of the Royal Mile, and don't accept stag-night groups.

Castle Rock Hostel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 9666; www.scotlands-top-hostels.com; 15 Johnston Tce; dm £13-15, d £40-55; ☎) With its bright, spacious, single-sex dorms, superb views and friendly staff, the 200-bed Castle Rock has prompted plenty of positive feedback from travellers. It has a great location – the only way to get closer to the castle would be to pitch a tent on the esplanade – a games room, reading lounge and big-screen video nights.

Edinburgh Backpackers Hostel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 2200; www.hoppo.com; 65 Cockburn St; dm £14-18.50; ☎) Just a short walk from the train station, Edinburgh Backpackers is clean, bright and friendly, with a lively bistro-bar on the ground floor. It's right in the heart of Edinburgh's pub culture, which makes it great for partying but not so good for a peaceful night's sleep.

St Christopher's Inn (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 1446; www.st-christophers.co.uk; 9-13 Market St; dm £9.50-21, d £50-60; ☎ ☒ ☑) The 108-bed St Christopher's is just across the street from the Market St entrance to Waverley train station, with accommodation in four- to 14-bed dorms, each with a toilet and power shower. It's a real party joint, with two bars (one chilled, one pumping) and a good-value restaurant, and it accepts stag and hen nights, so don't expect to catch up on your beauty sleep. There's a minimum two-night stay at weekends.

Other recommendations:

Budget Backpackers Hostel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 6351; www.budgetbackpackers.com; 37-39 Cowgate; dm £12.50-16, tw £48; ☎) Big, colourful, party place.

Edinburgh Metro (SYHA; Map pp76-7; ☎ 0870 004 1115; 11/2 Robertson's Close, Cowgate; s £18.50-23; ☎ ☒ ☑) Jul & Aug) Summer only, all single rooms.

Royal Mile Backpackers (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 6120; www.scotlands-top-hostels.com; 105 High St; dm £13-15) Small, cosy and quaint.

NEW TOWN & AROUND

City Centre Tourist Hostel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 441 6628; www.citycentrehostel.com; 3rd fl, 5 West Register St; dm £10-20) The City Centre is a small (around 40 beds), clean and relatively quiet hostel, with pine-wood bunks and comfy mattresses in four-, six-, eight- and 10-bed dorms. There's a small kitchen and TV lounge, and a laundry. The location is great – just two minutes' walk from train and bus stations. Don't confuse it with Princes St Backpackers, which shares the entrance.

Belford Hostel (Map pp72-3; ☎ 220 2200; www.hoppo.com; 6/8 Douglas Gardens; dm £14-18.50, d £45-65; ☎) An unusual hostel housed in a converted church, the Belford is under the same management as Edinburgh Backpackers. Although some people complain about noise – there are only thin partitions between dorms, and no ceilings – it's cheerful and well run with good facilities. This hostel is about 20 minutes' walk west of Waverley train station. If you're arriving by train from Glasgow or the north,

get off at Haymarket station, which is much closer.

Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel (SYHA; Map pp72-3; ☎ 0870 155 3255; www.edinburghcentral.org; 9 Hadington Pl, Leith Walk; dm £17-24.50, s/tw from £33/49; ☎ ☒ ☑) This brand new hostel, located about a half-mile north of Waverley train station, is a big (300 beds), flashy, five-star establishment with its own café-bistro as well as self-catering kitchen, smart and comfortable eight-bed dorms and private rooms, and mod cons including key-card entry and plasma-screen TVs.

OUTSIDE THE CENTRE

Mortonhall Caravan Park (☎ 664 1533; www.meadowhead.co.uk/mortonhall; 38 Mortonhall Gate, Frogston Rd East; tent sites incl 1 car & 2 people £18, tent & 1 person only £8; ☎ ☒ ☑) Located in attractive parkland 5 miles southeast of the centre, Mortonhall has an onsite shop, bar and restaurant. Note – the one-person tent rate is not available during the Edinburgh International Festival. Take bus 11 from Princes St (westbound).

Globetrotter Inn (Map p71; ☎ 336 1030; www.globetrotterinns.com; 46 Marine Dr; dm £15-19, d & tw £46; ☎) A large and comfortable hostel with luxury bunks, TV lounges, sauna and gym. Good value, but can occasionally be plagued by noisy stag-party groups. It's close to the waterfront and about 20 minutes by a shuttle bus from the city centre (£2.50 return, pick-up from Waterloo Place).

Menzies Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 4629; www.menzies-guesthouse.co.uk; 33 Leamington Tce; s £47, d £40-60) This is a clean, friendly and well-run place, with seven spacious, high-ceilinged Victorian rooms spread over three floors. The cheaper rooms, with shared bathroom, are small but offer excellent value.

Midrange

OLD TOWN

Most of the midrange accommodation in the Old Town is in chain hotels.

Travelodge Edinburgh Central (Map pp76-7; ☎ 0871 984 6137; www.travelodge.co.uk; 33 St Mary's St; r £71) Another centrally located chain hotel, convenient for the Royal Mile; twin rooms accommodate up to two adults and two kids.

Ibis Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 240 7000; www.ibishotel.com; 6 Hunter Sq; r £89) The Ibis is a spruce, modern, chain hotel, with a superb location just off the Royal Mile. The flat room rate does not include breakfast.

NEW TOWN

Dene Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 2700; www.deneguesthouse.com; 7 Eyre Pl; s £20-40, d £40-80; 🏠) The Dene is a friendly and informal place, set in a charming Georgian town house, with a welcoming owner and spacious bedrooms. The inexpensive single rooms make it ideal for solo travellers.

Castle Guest House (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 1975; www.castleguesthouse.com; 38 North Castle St; r per person £30-45) The bedrooms in this lovely traditionally decorated Georgian house – deep red walls and polished wood – are a little spartan, but at these prices and with this location it seems churlish to moan.

Stuart Guest House (Map p71; ☎ 557 9030; www.stuartguesthouse.com; 12 East Claremont St; r per person £38-55) A readers' favourite, the Stuart is a welcoming late-Georgian town house with many period features, including staircase, fireplaces and cornices.

Gerald's Place (Map pp72-3; ☎ 558 7017; www.geraldsplace.com; 21b Abercromby Pl; d £75-120; 🏠) Gerald is an unfailingly charming and helpful host, and his lovely Georgian garden flat has a great location across from a peaceful park and is just an easy stroll from the city centre.

rick's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 622 7800; www.ricksedinburgh.co.uk; 55a Frederick St; r £118) One of the first boutique hotels to appear in Edinburgh, rick's offers sharp styling and a laid-back atmosphere. The bedrooms boast walnut headboards and designer fabrics, with fluffy bathrobes, well-stocked minibars and Molton Brown toiletries.

TOLLCROSS

Tollcross is half a mile south of the western end of Princes St, along Lothian Rd.

Edinburgh City B&B (Map pp72-3; ☎ 622 0144; www.edinburghcityguesthouse.co.uk; 31 Grove St; d £50-70) This bright and cheerful four-bedroomed B&B, set in a Georgian-style terrace, boasts a superb location only 10 minutes' walk from the castle, and only 400m from Haymarket train station.

Amaryllis Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 3293; www.amaryllisguesthouse.com; 21 Upper Gilmore Pl; s £30-40, d £50-80; 🏠) The Amaryllis is a cute little Georgian town house on a quiet back street. There are five bedrooms, including a spacious family room that can take two adults and up to four kids. Princes St is only 10 minutes' walk away.

BRUNTSFIELD

Another half-mile south from Tollcross is Bruntsfield.

Robertson Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 2652; www.robertson-guesthouse.com; 5 Hartington Gardens; s £35-60, d £58-76; 🏠) Yet another homely Victorian house tucked away in this quiet back street, the Robertson offers a warm welcome and a range of healthy breakfast food, including yogurt, fruit and a vegetarian fry-up.

Albyn Townhouse (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 6459; www.albyntownhouse.co.uk; 16 Hartington Gardens; s £59-79, d £60-90; 🏠) Located at the end of a quiet, tree-lined cul-de-sac, the Albyn is a large Victorian villa whose hospitable owners will make you feel more than welcome. The 10 spacious, high-ceiling bedrooms, brightly done up in shades of pale yellow and green, include three family rooms (sleeping up to four people), with a baby cot available on request.

Greenhouse (Map pp72-3; ☎ 622 7634; www.greenhouse-edinburgh.com; 14 Hartington Gardens; s £65-80, d £70-90) The award-winning Greenhouse is a wholly vegetarian and vegan guesthouse, which uses organic and genetically modified-free foods as much as possible – the breakfast menu includes homemade veggie sausages, scrambled tofu, and pancakes with maple syrup – and even the soap and shampoo are free of animal products.

NEWINGTON

There are lots of guesthouses on and around Minto St and Mayfield Gardens (the continuation of North Bridge and Nicolson St) in Newington. This is the main traffic artery from the south and a main bus route into the city centre.

Fairholme Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 8645; www.fairholme.co.uk; 13 Moston Tce; r per person £25-45) A pleasant, quiet Victorian villa with five rooms (four with en-suite bathroom), the gay- and vegetarian-friendly Fairholme has been recommended by several travellers. It's on a quiet street close to a main bus route into the city centre.

Hopetoun (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 7691; www.hopetoun.com; 15 Mayfield Rd; s £25-45, d £50-90) The Hopetoun is a homely Victorian terrace about 10 minutes by bus from the city centre. There are two bedrooms, both decorated in bright and cheerful modern shades, with colourful paintings on the walls – no tartan kitschery here – and the landlady is a fount of knowledge about local history and traditional Scottish music.

Aonach Mor Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 8694; www.aonachmor.com; 14 Kilmaurs Tce; r per person £27-70; 🏠) This elegant Victorian terraced house is located on a quiet back street and has seven bedrooms, beautifully decorated, with many original period features. Our favourite is the four-poster bedroom with polished mahogany furniture and period fireplace.

Pollock Halls of Residence (Map pp72-3; ☎ 0800 028 7118; www.edinburghfirst.com; 18 Holyrood Park Rd; s £29-39, d £75-84; 🏠) This is a modern student complex belonging to the University of Edinburgh, with 1200 rooms (500 with en-suite bathroom). It's busy and often noisy, but close to the city centre and with Arthur's Seat as a backdrop. Available during Easter and summer vacations.

Southside Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 668 4422; www.southsideguesthouse.co.uk; 8 Newington Rd; s £50-65, d £64-130) Though set in a typical Victorian terrace, the Southside transcends the traditional guesthouse category and feels more like a modern boutique hotel. Its eight stylish rooms just ooze interior design, standing out from other Newington B&Bs through the clever use of bold colours and modern furniture.

Other recommendations:

Kenzie Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 668 1964; www.kenzie.co.uk; 16 Kilmaurs Rd; r per person £25-40) Situated in a quiet side street but close to a main bus route.

Salisbury Hotel (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 1264; www.the-salisbury.co.uk; 45 Salisbury Rd; s £50-70, d £60-110; 🏠) Boutique-style guesthouse in quiet, comfortable Georgian villa with large garden.

Sherwood Guest House (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 1200; www.sherwood-edinburgh.com; 42 Minto St; s £35-65, d £45-80; 🏠) Clean, comfortable and convenient.

PILRIG

Northeast of the New Town and west of Leith Walk, Pilrig St has lots of guesthouses, all within about a mile of the centre. To get there, take bus 11 from Princes St.

Balmoral Guest House (Map p71; ☎ 554 1857; www.balmoralguesthouse.co.uk; 32 Pilrig St; r per person £22-40) Travellers have recommended this comfortable, five-room B&B located in an elegant, flower-bedecked, Victorian terraced house with lots of period features.

Ardmor House (Map p71; ☎ 554 4944; www.ardmorhouse.com; 74 Pilrig St; s £50-65, d £65-110) The 'gay-owned, straight-friendly' Ardmor is a stylishly renovated Victorian house with five en-suite bedrooms, and all those little touches that

make a place special – an open fire, thick towels, crisp white bed linen and free newspapers at breakfast.

Top End
OLD TOWN

Apex International Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 300 3456; www.apexhotels.co.uk; 31-35 Grassmarket; r £99-244; 🏠) Centrally located and with good business facilities, the 171-room Apex has stylish, modern décor, large, luxurious bedrooms, a rooftop restaurant and great views of the castle.

Point Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 221 5555; www.point-hotel.co.uk; 34 Bread St; s/d from £135/155) Love it or hate it, there's no denying that the cutting-edge design of the Point Hotel is a talking point. For some, its stark minimalism and bold use of colour epitomise the best of contemporary design; for others, it's just plain odd. The superior bedrooms (known as Executive rooms) and the four Jacuzzi-equipped suites are spacious, stylish, and equipped with chic black leather sofas and fantastic views of Edinburgh Castle.

Witchery by the Castle (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 5613; www.thewitchery.com; Castlehill, Royal Mile; ste £295) Set in a 16th-century Old Town house in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle, the Witchery's seven lavish suites are extravagantly furnished with antiques, oak panelling, tapestries, open fires and roll-top baths, and supplied with flowers, chocolates and complimentary champagne. Overwhelmingly popular – you'll have to book several months in advance to be sure of getting a room.

NEW TOWN

Dukes of Windsor Street (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 6046; www.dukesofwindsor.com; 17 Windsor St; r £80-160) A relaxing eight-bedroom Georgian town house set on a quiet side street, only a few paces from Princes St, Dukes offers an appealing blend of modern sophistication and period atmosphere.

Scotsman Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 5565; www.thescotsmanhotelgroup.co.uk; 20 North Bridge; r £270-350; 🏠) The former offices of the *Scotsman* newspaper – opened in 1904 and hailed as 'the most magnificent newspaper building in the world' – are now home to this luxury hotel. Rooms on the northern side enjoy superb views over the New Town and Calton Hill, while the Penthouse Suite (£1200) has its own library and sauna.

Glasshouse (Map pp72-3; ☎ 525 8200; www.theetoncollection.com; 2 Greenside Pl; r £275. ste £400; 🏠) A

palace of cutting-edge design perched atop the Omni Centre at the foot of Calton Hill, and entered through the preserved façade of a 19th-century church, the Glasshouse sports luxury rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows, leather sofas, marble bathrooms and a rooftop garden.

Balmoral Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 2414; www.thebalmoralex.com; 1 Princes St; s £290-450, d £345-510; P) The sumptuous Balmoral – a prominent landmark at the eastern end of Princes St – offers some of the best accommodation in Edinburgh, including suites with 18th-century décor and some superb views over the city.

OUTSIDE THE CENTRE

our pick Prestonfield House Hotel (Map p71; ☎ 668 3346; www.prestonfield.com; Priestfield Rd; r £225-275; P) If the blonde wood, brown leather and brushed steel of modern boutique hotels leave you cold, then this is the place for you. A 17th-century mansion set in 20 acres of parkland (complete with peacocks and Highland cattle), Prestonfield House is draped in damask, packed with antiques and decorated in red, black and gold – look out for original tapestries, 17th-century embossed-leather panels, and £500-a-roll hand-painted wallpaper. The hotel's 30 rooms are supplied with all mod cons, including internet access, Bose sound systems, DVD players and flat-screen TVs.

EATING

In the last decade there has been a boom in the number of restaurants in Edinburgh – the city now has more restaurants per head of population than London. Eating out has become a commonplace event rather than something reserved for special occasions, and the choice of eateries ranges from stylish but inexpensive bistros and cafés to gourmet restaurants.

In addition, most pubs serve food, offering either bar meals or a more formal restaurant or both, but be aware that pubs without a Children's Certificate are not allowed to serve children under the age of 14.

If you want more listings than we can provide here, the excellent *Edinburgh & Glasgow Eating & Drinking Guide* (www.list.co.uk/eating-and-drinking), published annually by *The List* magazine, contains reviews of around 800 restaurants, cafés and bars.

Old Town & Around

BUDGET

Kebab Mahal (Map pp76-7; ☎ 667 5214; 7 Nicolson Sq; kebabs £4-7; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat) Sophisticated it ain't, but this is the Holy Grail of kebab shops – quality shish kebab and tandoori dishes washed down with chilled lassi for less than a fiver. It's a basic cafeteria-style place with a stainless-steel counter and glaring fluorescent lights, but the menu is 100% halal (the Edinburgh Mosque is just 100m along the road) and the kebabs and curries are authentic and delicious.

Always Sunday (Map pp76-7; ☎ 622 0667; 170 High St, Royal Mile; mains £4-8; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) If the thought of a greasy fry-up is enough to put you off your breakfast, head instead for this bright and breezy café which dishes up hearty but healthy grub such as fresh fruit smoothies, crisp salads, homemade soups and speciality sandwiches, washed down with Fairtrade coffee or herbal tea.

our pick Monster Mash (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 7069; 4a Forrester Rd; mains £5-7; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) Classic British grub of the 1950s – bangers and mash, shepherd's pie, fish and chips – is the mainstay of the menu at this nostalgia-fuelled café. But there's a twist – the food is all top-quality nosh freshly prepared from local produce, including Crombie's gourmet sausages. And there's even a wine list!

Favorit (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 6880; 19-20 Teviot Pl; mains £6-8; ☎ 8am-3am) A stylish café-bar with a retro vibe, Favorit caters for everyone – workers grabbing breakfast on the way to the office, coffee-slurping students skiving off afternoon lectures and late-night clubbers with an attack of the munchies. It also does excellent bacon *butties* (sandwiches).

MIDRANGE

Café Marlayne (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 3838; 7 Old Fishmarket Close, High St; mains £7-15; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm Tue-Sat) The second branch of the New Town French bistro (see above) is a hidden gem, down a steep cobbled alley off the Royal Mile, with a changed-daily menu of market-fresh produce and a lovely little lunchtime sun-trap of an outdoor terrace.

our pick Apartment (Map pp72-3; ☎ 228 6456; 7-13 Barclay Pl; mains £8-12; ☎ noon-3pm & 5-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-11pm Sat & Sun) Effortlessly cool, classy and almost always full, the Apartment is famed for fantastic bistro food and a buzzy, busy at-

TOP FIVE EDINBURGH CAFÉS

Café culture is firmly ensconced in Edinburgh, and it is as easy to get your daily caffeine fix here as it is in New York or Paris. Most cafés offer some kind of food, from cakes and sandwiches to full-on meals.

Ndebele (Map pp72-3; ☎ 221 1141; 57 Home St; mains £4-7; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun) This South African café is hidden deep in darkest Tollcross, but is worth seeking out for the changing menu of unusual African dishes (including at least one veggie option) and delicious African coffees and teas. Try a *boerewors* sandwich (sausage made with beef and coriander) with tomato and onion relish.

Circle Café (Map p71; ☎ 624 4666; 1 Brandon Tce; mains £5-8; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-4.30pm Sun) A great place for breakfast or a good value lunch, Circle is a bustling neighbourhood café serving great coffee and cakes, and fresh, tasty lunch dishes ranging from chunky, home-baked quiches to prawn and chilli salad.

Elephant House (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 5355; 21 George IV Bridge; mains £5-8; ☎ 9am-10pm) Here you'll find counters at the front, tables and views of the castle at the back, and little effigies and images of elephants everywhere. Excellent coffee and tasty, homemade food – pizzas, quiches, pies, sandwiches and cakes – at reasonable prices make Elephant House deservedly popular with local students, shoppers and office workers.

Glass & Thompson (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 0909; 2 Dundas St; mains £7-9; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-4.30pm Sun) Grab a table in this spick and span New Town deli and sip a double espresso as you ogle the cheeses in the cold counter or watch the world go by through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Munchies include tasty platters such as dolmatsi and falafel, or parma ham and parmesan.

Valvona & Crolla Caffè Bar (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 6066; 19 Elm Row, Leith Walk; mains £10-15; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-4.30pm Sun) Try breakfast with an Italian flavour – full *paesano* (meat) or *verdure* (veggie) fry-ups, or deliciously light and crisp *panettone* in *carrozza* (sweet brioche dipped in egg and fried) – or choose from almond croissants, muesli, yogurt and fruit, freshly squeezed orange juice and perfect Italian coffee. There's also a tasty lunch menu of classic Italian dishes.

mosphere; book in advance – by at least three weeks, preferably – and don't be surprised if you still have to wait. But it's worth being patient for treats such as marinated lamb meatballs with merguez and basil-wrapped goat's cheese.

Maxie's Bistro (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 7770; 5b Johnston Tce; mains £8-13; ☎ 11am-11pm) Maxie's candle-lit bistro, with its cushion-lined nooks set amid stone walls and wooden beams is a pleasant enough setting for a cosy dinner, but at summer lunchtimes people queue for the outdoor tables on Victoria Tce, with great views over Victoria St. The food is dependable – Maxie's has been in the food business for more than 20 years – ranging from pastas, steaks and stir-fries to superb seafood platters and daily specials, and there's an excellent selection of wines.

Buffalo Grill (Map pp76-7; ☎ 667 7427; 12-14 Chapel St; mains £8-17; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10.30pm Mon-Fri, 6-10.30pm Sat, 5-10.15pm Sun) The Buffalo Grill is cramped, noisy, fun and always busy, so book ahead. An American-style menu offers burgers, steaks and side orders of fries and onion rings, along

with fish and chicken dishes, prawn tempura and a vegetarian burger, but steaks are the main event. You can buy booze in the restaurant, or bring your own wine (£1 corkage per bottle).

Khushi's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 0057; 9 Victoria St; mains £9-13; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Established in 1947, Khushi's is something of an Edinburgh institution despite having moved from its original canteenlike home to bigger and brighter premises. Its speciality is basic Punjabi dishes cooked in the traditional way (listed on the menu as plain lamb, chicken or fish curry), but there are also several good vegetarian dishes. It's not licensed, but you can bring your own booze (no corkage).

Pancho Villa's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 4416; 240 Canongate; mains £9-13; ☎ noon-10pm Mon-Sat, 5-10pm Sun) With a Mexican-born owner and lots of Latin American and Spanish staff, it's not surprising that this colourful and lively restaurant is one of the most authentic-feeling Mexican places in town. The dinner menu includes delicious steak fajitas and great vegetarian spinach enchiladas. It's often busy, so book ahead.

Suruchi (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 6583; 14a Nicolson St; mains £9-14; ☎ noon-2pm & 5.30-11.30pm) A laid-back Indian eatery with handmade turquoise tiles, lazy ceiling fans and chilled-out jazz guitar, Suruchi offers a range of exotic dishes as well as the traditional tandoori standards, many with a Scottish twist. An amusing touch is provided by menu descriptions translated into broad Scots ('a *beezer o' a curry this...gey nip-pie oan the tongue*').

Amber (Map pp76-7; ☎ 477 8477; 354 Castlehill; mains £12-18; ☎ noon-3.45pm daily, 7-9pm Tue-Sat) Located in the Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre, this whisky-themed restaurant manages to avoid the tourist clichés and create genuinely interesting and flavoursome dishes such as fillet of pork with whisky and apple chutney, or vegetarian haggis in filo pastry with whisky cream sauce.

Point Hotel (Map pp76-7; ☎ 221 5555; 34 Bread St; 2-course dinner £20; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm Mon-Fri, 6-10pm Sat, 6-9pm Sun) The legendary set menus and reasonably priced wine list at the Point Hotel offer exceptional value – delicious Scottish/international cuisine served in an elegant room with crisp, white linen and attentive service. Reservations are strongly recommended.

TOP END

Tower (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 3003; Museum of Scotland, Chambers St; mains £16-25; ☎ noon-11pm) Chic and sleek, with a great view of the castle, Tower is set atop the Museum of Scotland building. It offers a menu of quality Scottish food, simply prepared – try half a dozen Loch Fyne oysters followed by a chargrilled Aberdeen Angus steak. A two-course pretheatre menu (£13) is available from 5pm to 6.30pm.

Atrium (Map pp76-7; ☎ 228 8882; 10 Cambridge St; mains £20-24; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm Mon-Fri, 6-10pm Sat) Elegantly draped in cream linen and candlelight, the Atrium is one of Edinburgh's most fashionable restaurants, counting Mick Jagger and Jack Nicholson among its past guests. The cuisine is modern Scottish with a Mediterranean twist, with the emphasis on the finest of fresh, seasonal produce – carpaccio of Aberdeen Angus beef with truffled potato salad, or rump of Perthshire lamb with dauphinoise potatoes.

New Town & Around

BUDGET

Queen St Café (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 2844; 1 Queen St; mains £5-7; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4.30pm Sun) The ever-popular café in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery bakes its own range of tempt-

ing cakes and scones, and serves a lunch menu (noon to 2.30pm) of hearty homemade soups (such as roast red pepper and sweet potato, or more traditional leek and potato), salads and sandwiches.

Blue Moon Café (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 2788; 1 Barony St; mains £6-8; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun) The Blue Moon is the focus of Broughton St's gay social life, always busy, always friendly, and serving up delicious nachos, salads, sandwiches and baked potatoes. It's famous for its homemade hamburgers (and beanburgers), which come plain or topped with cheese, chilli or salsa, and delicious daily specials.

MIDRANGE

Songkran (Map pp72-3; ☎ 225 7889; 24a Stafford St; mains £9-13; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 5.30-11pm Mon-Sat) You'd better book a table – and be prepared for a squeeze – to get in to this tiny New Town basement. The reason for the crush is some of the best Thai food in Edinburgh. Try the tender *yang* (marinated and barbecued beef, chicken or prawn), the crisp and tart orange chicken, or the chilli-loaded warm beef salad. A two-course lunch is £9.

Ourpick Valvona & Crolla VinCaffè (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 0088; 11 Multrees Walk, St Andrew Sq; mains £9-18; ☎ 10am-late Mon-Sat, 11am-5.30pm Sun) Foodie colours dominate the décor at this delightful Italian bistro – bottle-green pillars and banquettes, chocolate-and-cream coloured walls, espresso-black tables – a perfect backdrop for VinCaffè's superb antipasto (£18 for two), washed down with a bottle of pink Pinot Grigio. Live jazz from 7pm on Wednesdays.

Nargile (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 5755; 73 Hanover St; mains £10-15; ☎ noon-2pm & 5.30-10.30pm Mon-Thu, noon-2pm & 5.30-11pm Fri & Sat) Throw away any preconceptions about boring kebabs – this glitzy Turkish restaurant is a class act. Enjoy a spread of delicious *mezeler* (think Turkish tapas) followed by meltingly sweet, marinated lamb char-grilled to crispy perfection. Finish off with *baklava* (nut-filled pastry soaked in honey) and a Turkish coffee.

Café Marlayne (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 2230; 76 Thistle St; mains £12-16; ☎ noon-2pm & 6-10pm) All weathered wood and warm yellow walls, little Café Marlayne is a cosy nook offering French farmhouse cooking – *escargots* with garlic and parsley, oysters with lemon and Tabasco, roast quail, *boudin noir* (black pudding) with sautéed apples – at very reasonable prices. There's another branch in the Old Town (see p102).

TOP FIVE LUNCH SPOTS

Many restaurants in Edinburgh offer good-value lunches. Here are a few suggestions from various parts of the city.

Old Chain Pier (Map p71; ☎ 552 1233; 1 Trinity Cres; mains £5-10; ☎ food served noon-9pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-8pm Sun) The Old Chain Pier is a lovely little pub overlooking – nay, *overhanging* – the Firth of Forth on the waterfront near Granton Harbour. The excellent bar menu includes soup of the day, a creamy and filling seafood chowder, and a succulent steak-and-onion baguette with chips. The menu of real ales is no less enticing than the food.

First Coast (Map pp72-3; ☎ 313 4404; 99-101 Dalry Rd; mains £9-15; ☎ noon-2pm & 5-10.30pm Mon-Sat) Our favourite neighbourhood bistro, First Coast has a striking main dining area with pale grey-wood panelling, stripped stone walls and Victorian cornices, and a short and simple menu offering hearty comfort food such as whitefish fillet with crispy pancetta and peas, char-grilled lemon chicken, and pan-fried herb gnocchi. At lunch, and from 5pm to 6.30pm, you can have an excellent two-course meal for £10.

Daniel's Bistro (Map p71; ☎ 553 5933; 88 Commercial St; mains £11-15; ☎ 10am-10pm) Daniel comes from Alsace, and his all-French kitchen staff combine top Scottish and French produce with Gallic know-how to create a wide range of delicious dishes. The fish soup is excellent, and main courses range from slow-cooked knuckle of pork to Alpine *tartiflette* (French dish of cheese, potato, ham or pork, and cream). A seriously filling three-course lunch is £9.

La P'tite Folie (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 7983; 61 Frederick St; mains £11-15; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-11pm Mon-Sat, 6-11pm Sun) This is a delightful little restaurant with a Breton owner whose menu includes French classics – onion soup, *moules marinières* – alongside steaks, seafood and a range of *plats du jour*. The two-/three-course lunch is a bargain at £7.50/9.

Petit Paris (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 2442; 38-40 Grassmarket; mains £13-16; ☎ noon-3pm & 5.30-11pm, closed Mon Oct-Mar) Like the name says, this is a little piece of Paris, complete with checked tablecloths, friendly waiters and good-value grub – the *moules-frites* (mussels and chips) are excellent. There's a lunch deal offering the *plat du jour* and a coffee for £7; add a starter and it's £10.

Mussel Inn (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 5979; 61-65 Rose St; mains £13-16; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-10pm Mon-Thu, noon-10pm Fri & Sat, 5-10pm Sun) Owned by west-coast shellfish farmers, the Mussel Inn provides a direct outlet for fresh Scottish seafood. The busy restaurant, decorated with bright beech wood indoors, spills out onto the pavement in summer. A kilogram pot of mussels with a choice of sauces – try leek, horseradish, cider and cream – costs £10.50.

Stac Polly (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 2231; 29-33 Dublin St; mains £18-20; ☎ noon-2pm Mon-Fri, 6-10pm Mon-Sat) Named after a mountain in northwestern Scotland, Stac Polly's kitchen adds sophisticated twists to fresh Highland produce. Dishes such as loin of venison with redcurrant and rosemary jus keep the punters coming back for more.

TOP END

Café Royal Oyster Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 4124; 17a West Register St; mains £16-20; ☎ noon-2pm & 7-10pm) Pass through the revolving doors on the corner of West Register St and you're transported back to Victorian times – a palace of glinting mahogany, polished brass, marble floors,

stained glass, Doulton tiles, gilded cornices and starched table linen so thick that it creaks when you fold it. The menu is mostly classic seafood, from oysters on ice to *Coquilles St Jacques Parisienne* and lobster thermidor, augmented by a handful of beef and game dishes.

Oloroso (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 7614; 33 Castle St; mains £16-24; ☎ restaurant noon-2.30pm & 7-10.30pm, bar 11am-1am) Oloroso is one of Edinburgh's most stylish restaurants, perched on a glass-encased New Town rooftop with views across a Mary Poppins' chimney-scape to the Firth of Forth and Fife hills. Swathed in sophisticated cream linen and charcoal upholstery enlivened with splashes of deep yellow, the dining room serves top-notch Scottish produce with Asian and Mediterranean touches.

Leith

MIDRANGE

Ourpick Fishers Bistro (Map p71; ☎ 554 5666; 1 The Shore; mains £9-22; ☎ noon-10.30pm) This cosy little bar-turned-restaurant, tucked beneath a 17th-century signal tower, is one of the city's best seafood places. Fishers' fish cakes are

TOP FIVE VEGETARIAN RESTAURANTS

Many Edinburgh restaurants offer vegetarian options on the menu, some good, some bad, some indifferent. The places listed here are all 100% veggie and all fall into the 'good' category.

David Bann (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 5888; 56-58 St Mary's St; mains £8-12; 🕒 11am-10pm Sun-Thu, 11am-10.30pm Fri & Sat) If you want to convince a carnivorous friend that cuisine à la veg can be as tasty and inventive as a meat-muncher's menu, take them to David Bann's stylish restaurant – dishes such as Thai-spiced fritters of tofu and peas with mango chutney, and tart of braised fennel, spinach and goat's-cheese curd are guaranteed to win converts.

Ann Purna (Map pp72-3; ☎ 662 1807; 45 St Patrick's Sq; mains £5-9; 🕒 noon-2pm & 5.30-11pm Mon-Fri, 5.30-11pm Sat & Sun) This little gem of an Indian restaurant serves exclusively vegetarian dishes from southern India, served with a smile by the family team who run the place. If you're new to this kind of food, opt for a *thali* – a self-contained platter that has about half a dozen different dishes, including a dessert. You can get a light lunch for £5.

Susie's Wholefood Diner (Map pp76-7; ☎ 667 8729; 51-53 West Nicolson St; mains £4-7; 🕒 noon-8pm Mon, noon-9pm Tue-Sat, 1-8pm Sun) Susie's is a down-to-earth, self-service, vegetarian cafeteria with scrubbed-wood tables, rickety chairs and a friendly atmosphere. The menu changes daily but includes things such as tofu, aubergine and pepper casserole, stuffed roast tomatoes and Susie's famous falafel plates – reputedly 'the best falafel in the Western world'. BYOB, or try a bottle of organic wine.

Henderson's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2131; 94 Hanover St; mains £5-8; 🕒 8am-10.45pm Mon-Sat) Established in 1962, Henderson's is the grandmother of Edinburgh's vegetarian restaurants. The food is mostly organic and guaranteed genetically modified-free, and special dietary requirements can be catered for. The self-service restaurant still has something of a 1970s cafeteria feel to it (but in a good way), and the daily salads and hot dishes are as popular as ever. Three-course set lunch is £9.

Kalpna (Map pp72-3; ☎ 667 9890; 2-3 St Patrick Sq; mains £5-11; 🕒 noon-2pm & 5.30-10.30pm Mon-Sat year-round, plus 6-10.30pm Sun May-Sep) Another long-standing Edinburgh favourite, Kalpna is one of the best Indian restaurants in the country, vegetarian or otherwise. The cuisine is mostly Gujarati, with a smattering of dishes from other parts of India – try the *khumb masala* (spiced mushrooms in a coconut milk, tomato, garlic and coriander sauce).

an Edinburgh institution, and the rest of the handwritten menu (you might need a calligrapher to decipher it) rarely disappoints. Booking is recommended.

The Shore (Map p71; ☎ 553 5080; 3-4 The Shore; mains £13-17; 🕒 noon-2.30pm & 6.30-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-3pm & 6.30-10pm Sat & Sun) The atmospheric dining room next door to the popular Shore Bar is a haven of wood-panelled peace, with old photographs, nautical knick-knacks, fresh flowers and an open fire adding to the romantic theme. The menu is small, and specialises in Scottish seafood and game.

Raj (Map p71; ☎ 553 3980; 91 Henderson St, The Shore; mains £8-15; 🕒 noon-2.30pm & 5.30-11.30pm Sun-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat) Run by celebrity chef Tommy Miah (author of *True Taste of Asia*), the Raj is an atmospheric curry house overlooking the Water of Leith and serving Indian (including Goan) and Bangladeshi cuisine. Specialities include the tongue-tingling green Bengal chicken (marinated with lime juice, mint and chilli) and spicy Goan lamb garam fry.

If you can't get a table at Fishers Bistro, try the New Town branch, **Fishers in the City** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 5109; 58 Thistle St).

TOP END

Martin Wishart (Map p71; ☎ 553 3557; 54 The Shore; 3-course lunch/dinner £23/50; 🕒 noon-2pm & 7-10pm Tue-Sat) In 2001 this restaurant became the first in Edinburgh to win a Michelin star. The eponymous chef has worked with Albert Roux, Marco Pierre White and Nick Nairn, and brings a modern French approach to the best Scottish produce, from lobster and smoked haddock soufflé to braised saddle of lamb.

Self-Catering

There are grocery stores and food shops all over the city, many of them open 9am to 10pm daily. Many petrol stations also have late-opening shops that sell groceries.

There are several large supermarkets spread throughout the city such as **Sainsbury's** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 8400; 9-10 St Andrew Sq; 🕒 7am-10pm

Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun) and **Tesco** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 456 2400; 94 Nicolson St; 🕒 7am-midnight Mon-Sat, 9am-10pm Sun). The food hall in **Marks & Spencer** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2301; 54 Princes St; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 9am-8pm Thu, 11am-6pm Sun) sells high-quality ready-cooked meals.

Good delis for buying picnic goodies include **Valvona & Crolla** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 6066; 19 Elm Row, Leith Walk; 🕒 8am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun), **Peckham's** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 7054; 155-159 Bruntsfield Pl; 🕒 8am-midnight Mon-Sat, 9am-11pm Sun) and the food hall in **Jenners** (p112).

DRINKING

Edinburgh has more than 700 bars, which are as varied as the population – everything from Victorian palaces to rough-and-ready drinking dens, and from bearded, real-ale howffs (pubs) to trendy cocktail bars.

Royal Mile & Around

Jolly Judge (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2669; 7a James Cr) A snug little howff tucked away down a close, the Judge exudes a cosy 17th-century atmosphere (low, timber-beamed painted ceilings) and has the added attraction of a cheering open fire in cold weather. No music or gaming machines, just the buzz of conversation.

Ecco Vino (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 1441; 19 Cockburn St) With outdoor tables on sunny afternoons, and cosy candle-lit intimacy in the evenings, this comfortably cramped Tuscan-style wine bar offers a tempting range of Italian wines, though only a few are available by the glass – best to share a bottle.

Royal Mile Tavern (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 9681; 127 High St) An elegant, traditional bar lined with polished wood, mirrors and brass, Royal Mile serves real ale, good wines and fine food – *moules marinières* (mussels) and crusty bread is a lunchtime speciality.

The Tun (Map pp72-3; ☎ 557 9297; The Tun Bldg, Holyrood Rd) Set among the glass-and-steel architecture of the redeveloped Holyrood district, the Tun is a funky fish-tank of a place, with chunky leather sofas and steel bar stools. It's popular with political types and media people from the neighbouring BBC studios and the *Scotsman* newspaper offices just across the road.

Grassmarket & Around

The pubs in the Grassmarket have outdoor tables on sunny summer afternoons, but in the evenings are favoured by boozed-up lads on the pull, so steer clear if that's not your thing.

The Cowgate – the Grassmarket's extension to the east – is Edinburgh's clubland.

Last Drop (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 4851; 74 Grassmarket) The name commemorates the gallows that used to stand nearby, but the only swingers today are the pub's partying clientele, largely students and backpackers.

Bow Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 7667; 80 West Bow) One of the city's best traditional-style pubs (it's not as old as it looks) serving a range of excellent real ales and a vast selection of malt whiskies, the Bow Bar often has standing room only on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Beehive Inn (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 7171; 18-20 Grassmarket) The historic Beehive – a former coaching inn – is a big, buzzing party-pub, with a range of real ales, but the main attraction is sitting out the back in the Grassmarket's only beer garden, with views up to the castle.

Bannerman's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 3254; 212 Cowgate) A long-established favourite, Bannerman's straggles through a warren of old vaults and pulls in crowds of students, locals and backpackers with live rock, punk and indie bands.

Pear Tree House (Map pp76-7; ☎ 667 7533; 38 West Nicolson St) The Pear Tree is another student favourite, with comfy sofas and board games inside, plus the city's biggest and most popular beer garden in summer.

Rose Street & Around

Rose St was once a famous pub crawl, where generations of students, sailors and rugby fans would try to visit every pub on the street (around 17 of them) and down a pint of beer in each one.

Kenilworth (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 4385; 152-154 Rose St) A gorgeous, Edwardian drinking palace, complete with original fittings – from the tile floors, mahogany circle bar and gantry, to the ornate mirrors and gas lamps – the Kenilworth was Edinburgh's original gay bar back in the 1970s. Today it attracts a mixed crowd of all ages, and serves a good range of real ales and malt whiskies.

Robertsons 37 Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 6185; 37 Rose St) No 37 is to malt whisky connoisseurs what the Diggers (now called the Athletic Arms) once was to real-ale fans. Its long gantry sports a choice of more than 100 single malts and the bar provides a quiet and elegant environment in which to sample them.

Guildford Arms (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 4312; 1 West Register St) Located next door to the Café Royal Circle

TOP FIVE TRADITIONAL PUBS

Edinburgh is blessed with a large number of traditional 19th- and early-20th-century pubs, which have preserved much of their original Victorian or Edwardian decoration and serve cask-conditioned real ales and a staggering range of malt whiskies.

Athletic Arms (Diggers; Map pp72-3; ☎ 337 3822; 1-3 Angle Park Tce) Named after the cemetery across the street – the grave-diggers used to nip in and slake their thirst after a hard day's interring – the Diggers dates from the 1890s. It's still staunchly traditional – the décor has barely changed in 100 years – and has recently attempted to revive its reputation as a real-ale drinker's mecca by serving locally brewed Diggers' 80-shilling ale. Packed to the gills with football and rugby fans on match days.

Abbotsford (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 5276; 3 Rose St) One of the few pubs in Rose St that has retained its Edwardian splendour, the Abbotsford has long been a hang-out for writers, actors, journalists and media people, and has many loyal regulars. Dating from 1902, and named after Sir Walter Scott's country house, the pub's centrepiece is a splendid, mahogany island bar. Good selection of Scottish and English real ales.

Bennet's Bar (Map pp72-3; ☎ 229 5143; 8 Leven St) Situated beside the King's Theatre, Bennet's has managed to hang on to almost all of its beautiful Victorian fittings, from the leaded, stained-glass windows and ornate mirrors to the wooden gantry and the brass water taps on the bar (for your whisky – there are over 100 malts to choose from).

Café Royal Circle Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 1884; 17 West Register St) Perhaps the classic Edinburgh bar, the Café Royal's main claims to fame are its magnificent oval bar and the series of Doulton tile portraits of famous Victorian inventors. Check out the bottles on the gantry – staff line them up to look like there's a mirror there, and many a drink-befuddled customer has been seen squinting and wondering why he can't see his reflection.

Sheep Heid (Map p71; ☎ 656 6951; 43-45 The Causeway, Duddingston) Possibly the oldest inn in Edinburgh – with a licence dating back to 1360 – the Sheep Heid feels more like a country pub than an Edinburgh bar. Set in the semirural shadow of Arthur's Seat, it's famous for its 19th-century skittles alley and the lovely little beer garden.

Bar, the Guildford is another classic Victorian pub full of polished mahogany, brass and ornate cornices. The bar lunches are good – try to get a table in the unusual upstairs gallery, with a view over the sea of drinkers down below.

New Town & Broughton Street

Cumberland Bar (Map pp72-3; ☎ 558 3134; 1-3 Cumberland St) Immortalised as the stereotypical New Town pub in Alexander McCall-Smith's serialised novel *44 Scotland Street*, the Cumberland has an authentic, traditional wood-brass-and-mirrors look (despite being relatively new), and serves well-looked-after, cask-conditioned ales and a wide range of malt whiskies. There's also a pleasant little beer garden outside.

Opal Lounge (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 2275; 51 George St; ☎ noon-3am) The Opal Lounge is jammed at weekends with affluent twenty-somethings who've spent £200 and two hours in front of a mirror to achieve that artlessly scruffy look. During the week, when the air-kissing, cocktail-sipping crowds thin out, it's a good

place to relax with a fruit smoothie (or an expensive but expertly mixed cocktail) and sample the tasty Asian food. Expect to queue on weekend evenings.

Kay's Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 1858; 39 Jamaica Ct) Housed in a former wine-merchant's office, tiny Kay's Bar is a cosy haven with a coal fire and a fine range of real ales. Good food is served in the back room at lunchtime, but you'll have to book a table – Kay's is a popular spot.

Pivo Caffé (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 2925; 2-6 Calton Rd) Aiming to add a little taste of Bohemia to Edinburgh's bar scene, Pivo (the Czech word for beer) serves bottled Czech beers, Budvar-Budweiser on draught and two-pint cocktails, and has DJs on the decks from 10pm on.

Standing Order (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 4460; 62-66 George St) One of several converted banks on George St, Standing Order is a cavernous beer hall with a fantastic vaulted ceiling and some cosy rooms off to the right – look for the one with the original 27-tonne safe. Despite its size, it can be standing-room only at weekends.

Tonic (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 6431; 34a North Castle St) As cool and classy as a perfectly mixed martini, from the chic décor to the Phillippe Starck bar stools, Tonic prides itself on the authenticity of its cocktails, of which there are many – the menu goes on forever.

Leith & Granton

Port O'Leith (Map p71; ☎ 554 3568; 58 Constitution St) This is a good, old-fashioned, friendly local boozier. The Port is swathed with flags and cap bands left behind by visiting sailors – the harbour is just down the road. Pop in for a pint and you'll probably stay until closing time.

Starbank Inn (Map p71; ☎ 552 4141; 64 Laverockbank Rd) Along with the Old Chain Pier (see the Top Five Lunch Spots boxed text, p105), the Starbank is an oasis of fine ales and good, homemade food on Edinburgh's windswept waterfront. In summer there's a sunny conservatory, and in winter a blazing fire to toast your toes in front of.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edinburgh has a number of fine theatres and concert halls, and there are independent arthouse cinemas as well as mainstream movie theatres. Many pubs offer entertainment ranging from live Scottish folk music to pop, rock and jazz as well as karaoke and quiz nights, while a range of stylish modern bars purvey house, dance and hip-hop to the preclubbing crowd.

The comprehensive source for what's-on info is the *List* (www.list.co.uk), an excellent listings magazine covering both Edinburgh and Glasgow. It's available from most newsagents, and is published fortnightly on a Thursday.

Live Music

Check out the *List* and the *Gig Guide* (www.gigguide.co.uk), a free leaflet available in bars and music venues, to see who's playing where.

JAZZ, BLUES & ROCK

Henry's Cellar Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 538 7385; 8a Morrison St) One of Edinburgh's best live-music venues, Henry's has something going on every night of the week, from rock and indie to jazz and blues, funk to hip-hop to hardcore, staging both local bands and acts from around the world. Open till 3am at weekends.

Liquid Room (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2564; www.liquidroom.com; 9c Victoria St) The Liquid Room (see also Clubs) stages all kinds of gigs from local rock bands to tribute bands to the Average White Band. Check the programme on the website.

Whistle Binkie's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 5114; www.whistlebinkies.com; 4-6 South Bridge; ☎ 7pm-3am) This crowded cellar-bar just off the Royal Mile has live music every night till 3am, from rock and blues to folk and jazz. Open mic night on Monday and breaking bands on Tuesday are showcases for new talent.

Jazz Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 4298; www.thejazzbar.co.uk; 1a Chambers St) This atmospheric cellar bar, with its polished parquet floors, bare stone walls, candle-lit tables and stylish steel-framed chairs is owned and operated by jazz musicians. There's live music every night from 8.30pm to 3am, and on Saturday from 3.30pm.

TRADITIONAL

The capital is a great place to hear traditional Scottish (and Irish) folk music, with a mix of regular spots and impromptu sessions.

Royal Oak (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 2976; www.royal-oak-folk.com; 1 Infirmary St) This popular folk pub is tiny, so get there early (9pm start) if you want to be sure of a place. Sundays from 4pm to 8pm is open-session – bring your own instruments (or a good singing voice).

Sandy Bell's (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2751; 25 Forrest Rd) This unassuming bar has been a stalwart of the traditional-music scene since the Corrs were in nappies. There's music almost every evening at 9pm, and also at 3.30pm and 8pm on Sunday.

Pleasance Cabaret Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 650 2349; 60 The Pleasance; admission £7) The Pleasance is home to the Edinburgh Folk Club, which runs a programme of visiting bands and singers at 8pm on Wednesday nights.

Clubs

Edinburgh's club scene has some fine DJ talent and is well worth exploring; there are club-night listings in the *List*. Most of the venues are concentrated in and around the twin sumps of Cowgate and Calton Rd – so it's downhill all the way...

Bongo Club (Map pp72-3; ☎ 558 7604; www.thebongoclub.co.uk; Moray House, Paterson's Land, 37 Holyrood Rd) The weird and wonderful Bongo Club is famous for its long-running hip-hop, funk and breakbeat club night Headspin (admission £6 to £12; first or second Saturday of the month

from 11pm). Also worth checking out is the booming bass of roots and dub reggae night Messenger Sound System (admission £8; held third Saturday of the month from 11pm). The club is open as a café and exhibition space during the day.

Liquid Room (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2564; www.liquidroom.com; 9c Victoria St) Set in a subterranean vault deep beneath Victoria St, the Liquid Room is a superb club venue with a thundering sound system. There are regular club nights Wednesday to Saturday as well as live bands. The long-running Evol (admission £5; Friday from 10.30pm) is an Edinburgh institution catering to the indie-kid crowd, and is regularly voted as Scotland's top club night out.

Studio 24 (Map pp72-3; ☎ 558 3758; www.studio24edinburgh.co.uk; 24 Calton Rd) Studio 24 is the dark heart of Edinburgh's underground music scene, with a programme that covers all bases, from house to nu metal via punk, ska, reggae, crossover, tribal, electro, techno and dance. Retribution (admission £5; Saturday from 11pm) is the city's classic rock, metal and alt night (with Sanctuary, an alcohol-free club for 14- to 18-year-olds, running 6pm to 10pm the same evening).

Ego (Map pp72-3; ☎ 478 7434; www.clubego.co.uk; 14 Picardy Pl) A glitzy two-floor venue housed in a former casino, with huge Renaissance-style wall paintings, gay-friendly Ego dishes up everything from the dance classics of Fever (admission £10; second Saturday of the month from 11pm) to the hard house and trance of Nuklear Puppy (admission £12; second Friday of the month from 10.30pm).

Cabaret Voltaire (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 6176; www.thecabaretvoltaire.com; 36 Blair St) An atmospheric warren of stone-lined vaults houses Edinburgh's most 'alternative' club, which eschews huge dance floors and egotistical DJ-worship in favour of a 'creative crucible' hosting an eclectic mix of DJs, live acts, comedy, theatre, visual arts and the spoken word. Well worth a look.

Cinema

Film buffs will find plenty to keep them happy in Edinburgh's art-house cinemas, while popcorn munchers can choose from a range of multiplexes.

Cameo (Map pp72-3; ☎ 228 2800; 38 Home St; tickets £6.10) The three-screen, independently owned Cameo is a good, old-fashioned cinema showing an imaginative mix of mainstream and art-house movies. There is a good programme of

midnight movies and Sunday matinees, and the seats in Screen 1 are big enough to get lost in.

Filmhouse (Map pp76-7; ☎ 228 2688; 88 Lothian Rd; tickets £6; ☎) The Filmhouse is the main venue for the annual Edinburgh International Film Festival and screens a full programme of art-house, classic, foreign and second-run films, with lots of themes, retrospectives and 70mm screenings. It has wheelchair access to all three screens.

Cineworld Fountainpark (Map pp72-3; ☎ 0871 200 2000; Fountainpark Complex, Dundee St; tickets £6.30) The Cineworld is a massive 12-screen multiplex complete with café-bar, movie-poster shop and frighteningly overpriced popcorn.

VUE Cinema (Map pp76-7; ☎ 08712 240 240; Omni Centre, Greenside Pl; tickets £6.50) Another 12-screen multiplex, with three 'Gold Class' screens where you can watch from a luxurious leather reclining seat complete with side table for your drink and complimentary snacks (£9).

Classical Music, Opera & Ballet

The following are the main venues for classical music.

Edinburgh Festival Theatre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 529 6000; www.eft.co.uk; 13-29 Nicolson St; ☎ box office 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm show nights, 4pm-showtime Sun) A beautifully restored Art Deco theatre with a modern frontage, the Festival is the city's main venue for opera, dance and ballet, but also stages musicals, concerts, drama and children's shows.

Usher Hall (Map pp76-7; ☎ 228 1155; www.usherhall.co.uk; Lothian Rd; ☎ box office 10.30am-5.30pm, to 8pm show nights) The architecturally impressive Usher Hall hosts concerts by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) and performances of popular music. Closed for renovations until the start of the Edinburgh International Festival 2008.

St Giles Cathedral (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 9442; www.stgiles.net; High St) The big kirk on the Royal Mile plays host to a regular and varied programme of classical music, including popular lunchtime and evening concerts and organ recitals. The cathedral choir sings at the 10am and 11.30am Sunday services.

Queen's Hall (Map pp72-3; ☎ 668 2019; www.thequeenshall.net; Clerk St; ☎ box office 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, or till 15min after show begins) The home of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra also stages jazz, blues, folk, rock and comedy.

Sport

Edinburgh is home to two rival football teams playing in the Scottish Premier League – Heart

of Midlothian (aka Hearts) and Hibernian (aka Hibs). The domestic football season lasts from August to May, and most matches are played at 3pm on Saturday or 7.30pm on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Hearts has its home ground at **Tynecastle Stadium** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 200 7200; www.heartsfc.co.uk; Gorgie Rd), southwest of the city centre in Gorgie. Hibernian's home ground is northeast of the city centre at **Easter Road Stadium** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 661 2159; www.hibs.co.uk; 12 Albion Pl).

Each year, from January to March, Scotland's national rugby team takes part in the Six Nations Rugby Union Championship. The most important fixture is the clash against England for the Calcutta Cup. At club level the season runs from September to May. **Murrayfield Stadium** (Map p71; ☎ 346 5000; www.scottishrugby.org; 112 Roseburn St), about 1.5 miles west of the city centre, is the venue for international matches.

Most other sporting events, including athletics and cycling, are held at **Meadowbank Sports Centre** (Map p71; ☎ 661 5351; 139 London Rd), Scotland's main sports arena.

Horse-racing enthusiasts should head 6 miles east to **Musselburgh Racecourse** (☎ 665 2859; www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk; Linkfield Rd, Musselburgh; admission £15-20), Scotland's oldest racecourse (founded 1816), where meetings are held throughout the year.

Theatre, Musicals & Comedy

The cost of theatre tickets is in the £10 to £30 range.

Royal Lyceum Theatre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 248 4848; www.lyceum.org.uk; 30b Grindlay St; ☎ box office 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm show nights) A grand Victorian theatre located beside the Usher Hall, the Lyceum stages drama, concerts, musicals and ballet.

Traverse Theatre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 228 1404; www.traverse.co.uk; 10 Cambridge St; ☎ box office 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, till 8pm on show nights) The Traverse is the main focus for new Scottish writing and stages an adventurous programme of contemporary drama and dance. The box office is only open on Sunday (from 4pm) when there's a show on.

GAY & LESBIAN EDINBURGH

Edinburgh has a small – but perfectly formed – gay and lesbian scene, centred on the area around Broughton St (known affectionately as the 'Pink Triangle') at the eastern end of New Town. Blue Moon Café (see p104) at the foot of Broughton St is a friendly G&L caff offering good food and good company. It's also a good place to pick up on what's happening on the local scene.

Scotsgay (www.scotsgay.co.uk) is the local monthly magazine covering gay and lesbian issues, with listings of gay-friendly pubs and clubs.

Useful contacts:

Edinburgh LGBT Centre (☎ 478 7069; 58-60 Broughton St; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat & Sun)

Lothian Gay & Lesbian Switchboard (☎ 556 4049; www.lgls.co.uk; ☎ 7.30-10pm)

Lothian Lesbian Line (☎ 557 0751; ☎ 7.30-10pm Mon & Thu)

Pubs & Clubs

Edinburgh's most popular gay club nights are the long-running **Taste** (www.taste-clubs.com), currently hosted by Cabaret Voltaire (see Clubs), and **Fever** at Ego (see Clubs).

CC Blooms (Map pp72-3; ☎ 556 9331; 23 Greenside Pl, Leith Walk; admission free; ☎ 6pm-3am Mon-Sat, 7pm-3am Sun) The raddled old queen of the Edinburgh gay scene, CC's offers two floors of deafening dance and disco. It's a bit overpriced and overcrowded but worth a visit – go early, or sample the wild karaoke on Thursday and Sunday nights.

Regent (Map pp72-3; ☎ 661 8198; 2 Montrose Tce; ☎ 11am-1am Mon-Sat, 12.30pm-1am Sun) This is a pleasant, gay local with a relaxed atmosphere (no loud music), serving coffee and croissants as well as excellent real ales, including Deuchars IPA and Caledonian 80/-. Meeting place for the Lesbian and Gay Real Ale Drinkers club (first Monday of month, 9pm).

Claremont Bar (Map p71; ☎ 556 5662; 133-135 East Claremont St; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat, 12.30pm-midnight Sun) Scotland's only sci-fi theme pub (no, you have to see it), Claremont is a friendly, gay-owned bar and restaurant. Saturday nights are men-only nights, when leather, kilts, skinheads and bears are the order of the evening.

King's Theatre (Map pp72-3; ☎ 529 6000; www.eft.co.uk; 2 Leven St, Bruntsfield; ☎ box office open 1hr before show) King's is a traditional theatre with a programme of musicals, drama, comedy and its famous Christmas pantomime.

Edinburgh Playhouse (Map pp72-3; ☎ 524 3301, bookings ☎ 0870 606 3424; www.edinburgh-playhouse.co.uk; 18-22 Greenside Pl; ☎ box office 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm show nights) This restored theatre at the top of Leith Walk stages Broadway musicals, dance shows, opera and popular-music concerts.

Stand Comedy Club (Map pp76-7; ☎ 558 7272; www.the-stand.co.uk; 5 York Pl; tickets £2-12) The Stand, founded in 1995, is Edinburgh's main comedy venue. It's an intimate cabaret bar with performances every night and a free Sunday lunchtime show.

SHOPPING

Princes St is Edinburgh's principal shopping street, lined with all the big high-street stores, with many smaller shops along pedestrianised Rose St, and more expensive designer boutiques on George St. There are also two big shopping centres in the New Town – **Princes Mall** (Map pp76-7), at the eastern end of Princes St, and the nearby **St James Centre** (Map pp76-7) at the top of Leith St, plus a designer shopping complex with a flagship Harvey Nichols store on the eastern side of St Andrew Sq. The huge **Ocean Terminal** (Map p71) in Leith is the biggest shopping centre in the city.

For more off-beat shopping – including fashion, music, crafts, gifts and jewellery – head for the cobbled lanes of Cockburn, Victoria and St Mary's Sts, all near the Royal Mile in the Old Town, William St in the western part of New Town, and the Stockbridge district, immediately north of the New Town.

Cashmere & Wool

Woollen textiles and knitwear are one of Scotland's classic exports. Scottish cashmere – a fine, soft wool from young goats and lambs – provides the most luxurious and expensive knitwear and has been seen gracing the torsos of pop star Robbie Williams and England footballer David Beckham.

Designs On Cashmere (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 6394; 28 High St) and the **Cashmere Store** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 1577; 2 St Giles St) are good places to start, with a wide range of traditional and modern knitwear, while the colourful designs at **Joyce Forsyth Designer Knitwear** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 220 4112; 42 Candlemaker Row; ☎ closed Sun & Mon) will drag your ideas about woollens firmly into the 21st century.

Edinburgh Woollen Mill (Map pp76-7; ☎ 226 3840; 139 Princes St) is an old stalwart of the tourist trade, with a good selection of traditional jerseys, cardigans, scarves, shawls and rugs.

Crafts & Gifts

The **One World Shop** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 229 4541; St John's Church, Princes St) stocks a wide range of handmade crafts from developing countries, including paper goods, rugs, textiles, jewellery, ceramics, accessories, food and drink, all from accredited Fair Trade suppliers. During the Festival period (when the shop stays open till 6pm) there's a crafts fair in the churchyard outside.

Meadows Pottery (Map pp72-3; ☎ 662 4064; 11a Summerhall Pl) sells colourful stoneware, all hand-thrown on the premises, and the **Adam Pottery** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 557 3978; 76 Henderson Row) produces its own ceramics, mostly decorative, in a wide range of styles.

Galerie Mirages (Map pp72-3; ☎ 315 2603; 46a Raeburn Pl) is an Aladdin's Cave packed with jewellery, textiles and handicrafts from all over the world, best known for its silver, amber and gemstone jewellery in both ethnic and contemporary designs.

Department Stores

Jenners (Map pp76-7; ☎ 225 2442; 48 Princes St) Founded in 1838, Jenners is the *grande dame* of Scottish department stores. It stocks a wide range of quality goods, both classic and contemporary.

John Lewis (Map pp76-7; ☎ 556 9121; St James Centre) The place to go for good-value clothes and household goods.

Harvey Nichols (Map pp76-7; ☎ 524 8388; 30-34 St Andrew Sq) The jewel in the crown of Edinburgh's shopping scene has four floors of designer labels and eye-popping price tags.

Tartan & Highland Dress

There are dozens of shops along the Royal Mile and Princes St where you can buy kilts and tartan goods.

Kinloch Anderson (Map p71; ☎ 555 1390; 4 Dock St, Leith) One of the best, this was founded in 1868 and is still family-run. Kinloch Anderson is a supplier of kilts and Highland dress to the royal family.

Geoffrey (Tailor) Inc (Map pp76-7; ☎ 557 0256; 57-59 High St) Can fit you out in traditional Highland dress, or run up a kilt in your own clan tartan. Its offshoot, 21st Century Kilts, offers modern fashion kilts in a variety of fabrics.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Edinburgh Airport (☎ 333 1000; www.edinburghairport.com), 8 miles west of the city, has numerous flights to other parts of Scotland and the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe. See p449 for details of flights to Edinburgh from outside Scotland. **British Airways/Loganair** (☎ 0845 773 3377) operates daily flights to Inverness, Wick, Orkney, Shetland and Stornoway.

Bus

Edinburgh Bus Station (Map pp76-7) is at the northeast corner of St Andrew Sq, with pedestrian entrances from the square and from Elder St. For timetable information, call **Traveline** (☎ 0871 200 22 33; www.travelinescotland.com).

Scottish Citylink (☎ 0870 550 5050; www.citylink.co.uk) buses connect Edinburgh with all of Scotland's cities and major towns. The following are sample one-way fares departing from Edinburgh.

Destination	Fare	Duration	Frequency
Aberdeen	£20	3¼hr	3 daily
Dundee	£11	1¾hr	hourly
Fort William	£23	4-5hr	7 daily
Glasgow	£5	1¼hr	15min
Inverness	£20	4½hr	3 daily
Portree	£35	8hr	2 daily
Stirling	£5	1hr	hourly

Bus service 900 runs frequently between Edinburgh and Glasgow (£5, 1¼ hours, every 15 minutes).

It's also worth checking with **Megabus** (☎ 0900 160 0900; www.megabus.com) for cheap intercity bus fares (from as little as £1.50) from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverness and Perth.

See the Transport chapter, p451, for details of buses to Edinburgh from London and the rest of the UK.

Car & Motorcycle

Arriving in or leaving Edinburgh by car during the morning and evening rush hours (7.30am to 9.30am and 4.30pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday) is an experience you can live without. Try to time your journey to avoid these periods. In particular, there can be huge tailbacks on the A90 between Edinburgh and the Forth Road Bridge.

Train

The main terminus in Edinburgh is Waverley train station (Map pp76-7), located in the heart of the city. Trains arriving from, and departing for, the west also stop at Haymarket station (Map pp72-3), which is more convenient for the West End. You can buy tickets, make reservations and get travel information at the **Edinburgh Rail Travel Centre** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 4.45am-12.30am Mon-Sat, 7am-12.30am Sun) in Waverley station. For fare and timetable information, phone the **National Rail Enquiry Service** (☎ 08457 48 49 50; www.nationalrail.co.uk) or use the Journey Planner on the website.

First ScotRail operates a regular shuttle service between Edinburgh and Glasgow (£10.30, 50 minutes, every 15 minutes), and frequent daily services to all Scottish cities including Aberdeen (£37, 2½ hours), Dundee (£19, 1½ hours) and Inverness (£37, 3¼ hours).

See the Transport chapter, p451, for details of trains to Edinburgh from London.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

The Lothian Buses **Airlink** (www.flybybus.com) service 100 runs from Waverley Bridge, located just outside the train station, to the airport (£3/5 one way/return, 30 minutes, every 10 to 15 minutes) via the West End and Haymarket.

An airport taxi to the city centre costs around £14 and takes about 20 minutes. Both buses and taxis depart from outside the arrivals hall; go out through the main doors and turn left.

Bicycle

Thanks to the efforts of local cycling campaign group Spokes and a bike-friendly city council, Edinburgh is well equipped with bike lanes and dedicated cycle tracks. You can buy a map of the city's cycle routes from most bike shops.

Biketrax (Map pp72-3; ☎ 228 6633; www.biketrax.co.uk; 11 Lochrin Pl; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5.30pm Sat, noon-5pm Sun) rents out a wide range of cycles and equipment, including kids' bikes, tandems, recumbents, pannier bags, child seats – even uncycles! A mountain bike costs £16 for 24 hours, £12 for extra days, and £70 for one week. You'll need a £100 cash or credit-card deposit and some form of ID.

For more on cycling, see p59.

Car & Motorcycle

Though useful for day trips beyond the city, a car in central Edinburgh is more of a liability than a convenience. There is restricted access on Princes St, George St and Charlotte Sq, many streets are one way and finding a parking place in the city centre is like striking gold. Queen's Dr around Holyrood Park is closed to motorised traffic on Sunday.

PARKING

There's no parking on main roads into the city from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday. Also, parking in the city centre can be a nightmare. On-street parking is controlled by self-service ticket machines from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday, and costs £1.80 per hour, with a two-hour maximum. If you break the rules, you'll get a fine, often within minutes of your ticket expiring – Edinburgh's parking wardens are both numerous and notorious. The fine is £60, reduced to £30 if you pay up within 14 days. Cars parked illegally will be towed away. There are large, long-stay car parks at the St James Centre, Greenside Pl, New St, Castle Tce and Morrison St. Motorcycles can be parked free at designated areas in the city centre.

CAR RENTAL

All the big, international car-rental agencies have offices in Edinburgh (see p454).

There are many smaller, local agencies that offer better rates. One of the best is **Arnold Clark** (Map p71; ☎ 657 9120; www.arnoldclarkrental.co.uk; 20 Seafield Rd East) near Portobello, which charges from £23 a day, or £110 a week for a small car, including VAT and insurance. The daily rate includes 250 miles a day; excess is charged at 4p a mile. For periods of four days and more, mileage is unlimited.

Public Transport

Edinburgh's public transport system consists entirely of buses; the main operators are **Lothian Buses** (www.lothianbuses.co.uk) and **First-Edinburgh** (www.firstedinburgh.co.uk); for timetable information contact **Traveline** (☎ 0871 200 22 33; www.travelinescotland.com).

Bus timetables, route maps and fare guides are posted at all main bus stops, and you can pick up a copy of the free *Lothian Buses Route Map* from **Lothian Buses Travelshop** (Hanover St (Map pp76-7; ☎ 8.15am-6pm Mon-Sat); Shandwick Pl (Map pp76-7; ☎ 8.15am-6pm Mon-Sat); Waverley Bridge

(Map pp76-7; ☎ 555 6363; ☎ 8.15am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-5pm Sun).

Adult fares are £1; children aged under five travel free and those aged five to 15 pay a flat fare of 60p. On Lothian Buses you must pay the driver the exact fare, but First Edinburgh buses will give change. Lothian Bus drivers also sell a Daysaver ticket (£2.50) that gives unlimited travel (on Lothian Buses only, excluding night buses) for a day. Night-service buses (www.nightbuses.com), which run hourly between midnight and 5am, charge a flat fare of £2.50.

You can also buy a Ridacard (from Travleshops; not available from bus drivers) that gives unlimited travel for one week for £13.

The **Lothian Buses lost property office** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 558 8858; lostproperty@lothianbuses.co.uk; Main Depot, Annadale St; ☎ 10am-1.30pm Mon-Fri) is located north of the city centre.

Taxi

Edinburgh's black taxis can be hailed in the street, ordered by phone (extra 60p charge), or picked up at one of the many central ranks. The minimum charge is £1.50 (£2.50 at night) for the first 450m, then 25p for every subsequent 225m or 45 seconds – a typical 2-mile trip across the city centre will cost around £5. Tipping is up to you – because of the high fares local people rarely tip on short journeys, but occasionally round up to the nearest 50p on longer ones. Some taxi companies:

Central Taxis (☎ 229 2468)

City Cabs (☎ 228 1211)

ComCab (☎ 272 8000)

AROUND EDINBURGH

Edinburgh is small enough that, when you need a break from the city, the beautiful surrounding countryside isn't far away and is easily accessible by public transport, or even by bike. The old counties around Edinburgh are called Midlothian, West Lothian and East Lothian, often referred to collectively as 'the Lothians'.

MIDLOTHIAN

Queensferry

☎ 0131

Queensferry is located at the narrowest part of the Firth of Forth, where ferries have sailed to Fife from the earliest times. The village takes

its name from Queen Margaret (1046–93), who gave pilgrims free passage across the firth on their way to St Andrews. Ferries continued to operate until 1964 when the graceful **Forth Road Bridge** – now Europe's fifth longest – was opened.

Predating the road bridge by 74 years, the magnificent **Forth Bridge** – only outsiders ever call it the Forth Rail Bridge – is one of the finest engineering achievements of the 19th century. Completed in 1890 after seven years' work, its three huge cantilevers span 1447m and took 59,000 tonnes of steel, eight million rivets and the lives of 58 men to build.

In the pretty, terraced High St in Queensferry is the small **Queensferry Museum** (☎ 331 5545; 53 High St; admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2.15-5pm Mon & Thu-Sat, noon-5pm Sun). It contains some interesting background information on the bridges, and a fascinating exhibit on the 'Burry Man', part of the village's summer gala festivities (see p95).

There are several good places to eat and drink along the High St, including the stylish **Orocco Pier** (☎ 331 1298; www.oroccopier.co.uk; 17 High St; mains £12-23; ☎ 9am-10pm), which has a modern dining area and outdoor terrace with a stunning view of the Forth Bridge.

The atmospheric **Hawes Inn** (☎ 331 1990; Newhalls Rd; mains £6-12; ☎ food served noon-10pm), famously mentioned in Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped*, serves excellent pub grub; it's opposite the Inchcolm ferry, right beside the railway bridge.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Queensferry lies on the southern bank of the Firth of Forth, 8 miles west of Edinburgh city centre. To get there, take First Edinburgh bus 43 (£2.20, 30 minutes, three hourly) west-bound from St Andrew Sq. It's a 10-minute walk from the bus stop to the Hawes Inn and the Inchcolm ferry.

Trains go from Edinburgh's Waverley and Haymarket stations to Dalmeny station (£3.20, 15 minutes, two to four hourly). From the station exit, the Hawes Inn is five minutes' walk along a footpath (across the road, behind the bus stop) that leads north beside the railway and then downhill under the bridge.

Inchcolm

The island of Inchcolm lies east of the Forth bridges, less than a mile off the coast of Fife. Only 800m long, it is home to the ruins of

Inchcolm Abbey (☎ 01383-823332; Inchcolm, Fife; adult/child £4.50/2.25; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Sep), one of Scotland's best-preserved medieval abbeys, founded by Augustinian priors in 1123.

The ferry boat **Maid of the Forth** (☎ 0131-331 4857; www.maidoftheforth.co.uk) sails to Inchcolm from Hawes Pier in Queensferry. There are one to four sailings most days from May to October. The return fare is £13.50/5.25 per adult/child, including admission to Inchcolm Abbey. It's a half-hour sail to Inchcolm and you get 1½ hours ashore. As well as the abbey, the trip gives you the chance to see the island's grey seals, puffins and other seabirds.

Sea.fari (☎ 331 4857; www.seafari.co.uk) runs high-speed boat trips to Inchcolm from Newhaven harbour near Leith, in Edinburgh (adult/child £20/16), giving you 50 minutes ashore on the island.

Hopetoun House

☎ 0131

Hopetoun House (☎ 331 2451; www.hopetounhouse.com; adult/child £8/4.25; ☎ 10.30am-5pm Easter-Sep, last admission 4pm) is one of Scotland's finest stately homes, with a superb location in lovely grounds beside the Firth of Forth. There are two parts – the older built to Sir William Bruce's plans between 1699 and 1702 and dominated by a splendid stairwell with (modern) trompe l'oeil paintings; and the newer designed between 1720 and 1750 by three members of the Adam family, William and sons Robert and John. The highlights are the red and yellow Adam drawing rooms, lined in silk damask, and the view from the roof terrace.

Britain's most elegant equine accommodation – where the marquis once housed his pampered racehorses – is now the stylish **Stables Tearoom** (☎ 331 3661; mains £5-8; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Easter-Sep), a delightful spot for lunch.

Hopetoun House is 2 miles west of Queensferry along the coast road. Driving from Edinburgh, turn off the A90 onto the A904 just before the Forth Bridge and follow the signs.

Rosslyn Chapel

☎ 0131

The success of Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* and the subsequent Hollywood film has seen a flood of visitors descend on Scotland's most beautiful and enigmatic church – **Rosslyn Chapel** (Collegiate Church of St Matthew;

☎ 440 2159; www.rosslynchapel.com; Roslin; adult/child £7/free; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-4.45pm Sun Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-4.45pm Sun Oct-Mar). The chapel was built in the mid-15th century for William St Clair, third earl of Orkney, and the ornately carved interior – at odds with the architectural fashion of its time – is a monument to the mason's art, rich in symbolic imagery. As well as flowers, vines, angels and biblical figures, the carved stones include many examples of the pagan 'Green Man'; other figures are associated with Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Intriguingly, there are also carvings of plants from the Americas that predate Columbus' voyage of discovery. The symbolism of these images has led some researchers to conclude that Rosslyn is some kind of secret Templar repository, and it has been claimed that hidden vaults beneath the chapel could conceal anything from the Holy Grail or the head of John the Baptist to the body of Christ himself. The chapel is owned by the Episcopal Church of Scotland and services are still held here on Sunday mornings.

The chapel is on the eastern edge of the village of Roslin, 7 miles south of Edinburgh's centre. Lothian Bus 15 (not 15A) runs from St Andrew Sq in Edinburgh to Roslin (£1, 30 minutes, every 30 minutes).

Celtic Trails (☎ 448 2869; www.celtictrails.co.uk) offers half-/whole-day tours of the chapel and surrounding area for £32/49 per person, including admission fees.

Pentland Hills

Rising on the southern edge of Edinburgh, the Pentland Hills stretch 16 miles southwest to near Carnwath in Lanarkshire. The hills rise to 579m at their highest point and offer excellent, not-too-strenuous walking with great views. There are several access points along the A702 road on the southern side of the hills. MacEwan's bus 100 runs four times daily along the A702 from Princes St in Edinburgh to Biggar.

EAST LOTHIAN

Beyond the former coalfields of Dalkeith and Musselburgh, the fertile farmland of East Lothian stretches eastwards along the coast to the seaside resort of North Berwick and the fishing harbour of Dunbar. In the middle lies the prosperous market town of Haddington.

Haddington & Around

☎ 01620 / pop 8850

Haddington, straddling the River Tyne 18 miles east of Edinburgh, was made a royal burgh by David I in the 12th century. Most of the modern town, however, dates from the 17th to 19th centuries during the period of prosperity after the Agricultural Revolution. The prettiest part of town is the tree-lined Court St, with its wide pavement and grand 18th- and 19th-century buildings.

Church St leads from the eastern end of High St to **St Mary's Parish Church** (☎ 823109; Side-gate; admission free; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Sat, 2-4.30pm Sun Apr-Sep). Built in 1462, it's the largest parish church in Scotland and one of the finest pre-Reformation churches in the country.

A mile south of Haddington is **Lennoxlove House** (☎ 823720; Lennoxlove Estate; adult/child £5/3; ☎ guided tours 1.30-4pm Wed, Thu & Sun Apr-Oct), a hidden gem of a country house dating originally from around 1345, with major extensions and renovations from the 17th to the early 20th centuries. It contains fine furniture and paintings, and memorabilia relating to Mary, Queen of Scots. Chief among these are her death mask and a silver casket given to her by Francis II of France, her first husband. The house has been the seat of the duke of Hamilton since 1947.

First Edinburgh buses X6 and X8 run between Edinburgh and Haddington every 30 minutes. The nearest train station is at Drem, 3 miles to the north.

North Berwick

☎ 01620 / pop 6220

North Berwick is an attractive Victorian seaside resort with long sandy beaches, three golf courses and a small harbour. The **tourist office** (☎ 892197; Quality St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Apr & May, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Oct-Mar) is two blocks inland from the harbour.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Top marks to the bright spark who came up with the idea for the **Scottish Seabird Centre** (☎ 890202; www.seabird.org; The Harbour; adult/child £6.95/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5.30pm Sat & Sun Feb, Mar & Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Jan), an ornithologist's paradise that uses remote-control video cameras sited on the Bass Rock and other islands to relay live images of nesting gannets and

other seabirds – you can control the cameras yourself, and zoom in on scenes of cosy gannet domesticity.

Off High St, a short steep path climbs up **North Berwick Law** (184m), a conical hill that dominates the town. When the weather's fine there are great views to spectacular **Bass Rock**, iced white in spring and summer with guano from thousands of nesting gannets. The **Sula II** (☎ 892838) runs boat trips (adult/child £8.50/4, 1½ hours, daily April to September) around Bass Rock and Fidra Island, departing from North Berwick's harbour.

Two miles west of North Berwick is **Dirleton Castle** (HS; ☎ 850330; Dirleton; adult/child £4.50/2.25; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4.30pm Oct-Mar), an impressive medieval fortress with massive round towers, a drawbridge and a horrific pit dungeon, surrounded rather incongruously by beautiful, manicured gardens.

Perched on a cliff 3 miles east of North Berwick is the spectacular ruin of **Tantallon Castle** (HS; ☎ 892727; adult/child £4.50/2.25; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4.30pm Sat-Wed Oct-Mar). Built around 1350, it was the fortress residence of the Douglas earls of Angus (the 'Red Douglases'), defended on one side by a series of ditches and on the other by an almost sheer drop into the sea.

SLEEPING & EATING

North Berwick has plenty of places to stay, though they can fill up quickly at weekends when golfers are in town. Recommended B&Bs include **Glebe House** (☎ 892608; www.glebehouse-nb.co.uk; Law Rd; r per person £40-45; ☎), a beautiful Georgian country house with three spacious bedrooms, and homely **Beach Lodge** (☎ 892257; www.beachlodge.co.uk; 5 Beach Rd; r per person from £40), which offers sea views and vegetarian breakfasts.

The top eating places in the area are the **Grange** (☎ 893344; 35 High St; 3-course lunch £10, mains £12-19; ☎ lunch & dinner) in the centre of town, and the delightful **Deveau's Brasserie** (☎ 850241; Open Arms Hotel, Dirleton; mains £11-17; ☎ lunch & dinner) in the village of Dirleton.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

North Berwick is 24 miles east of Edinburgh. First Edinburgh bus 124 runs between Edinburgh and North Berwick (1½ hours, every 20 minutes). There are frequent trains between North Berwick and Edinburgh (£4.60, 35 minutes, hourly).

Dunbar

☎ 01368 / pop 6350

Dunbar was an important Scottish fortress town in the Middle Ages, but little remains of its past save for the tottering ruins of **Dunbar Castle** overlooking the harbour. Today the town survives as a fishing port and seaside resort, famed in the USA as the birthplace of John Muir (1838-1914), pioneer conservationist and father of the US national park system.

The **tourist office** (☎ 863353; 143 High St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr, May & Oct) is near the town hall.

The slightly down-at-heel town centre is home to **John Muir House** (☎ 862595; 128 High St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Wed-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Nov-Mar), the birthplace and childhood home of the great man himself. The nearby **Dunbar Town House Museum** (☎ 863734; High St; admission free; ☎ 12.30-4.30pm Apr-Oct, 2-4.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) provides an introduction to local history and archaeology.

From the castle, a scenic 2-mile cliff-top trail follows the coastline west to the sands of Belhaven Bay and **John Muir Country Park**.

First Edinburgh bus X6 (one hour, hourly) runs between Edinburgh and Dunbar. Trains from Edinburgh's Waverley train station serve Dunbar (£8, 20 minutes) every hour or so.

WEST LOTHIAN Linlithgow

☎ 01506 / pop 13,400

This ancient royal burgh is one of Scotland's oldest towns, though much of it 'only' dates from the 15th to 17th centuries. Its centre retains a certain charm, despite some ugly modern buildings and occasional traffic congestion, and the town makes an excellent day trip from Edinburgh.

The **tourist office** (☎ 844600; ☎ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct) is in the Burgh Halls at the Cross.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The town's main attraction is the magnificent **Linlithgow Palace** (HS; ☎ 842896; Church Peel; adult/child £5/2.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4.30pm Oct-Mar), begun by James I in 1425. The building of the palace continued for over a century and it became a favourite royal residence – James V was born here in 1512, as was his daughter Mary (later Queen of Scots) in 1542, and Bonnie Prince Charlie visited briefly in 1745. The elaborately carved **King's Fountain**, the

centrepiece of the palace courtyard, flowed with wine during Charlie's stay. The fountain, commissioned by James V in 1537, is the oldest in Britain, and was restored to full working order in 2005.

Beside the palace is the Gothic **St Michael's Church** (☎ 842188; Church Peel; admission free; 🕒 10.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-4.30pm Sun May-Sep, 10.30am-1pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr). Built between the 1420s and 1530s, it is topped by a controversial aluminium spire that was added in 1964. The church is said to be haunted by a ghost that foretold King James IV of his impending defeat at Flodden in 1513.

The **Linlithgow Story** (☎ 670677; Annet House, 143 High St; adult/child £1.50/1, Sun free; 🕒 11am-5pm Mon-Sat & 1-4pm Sun Apr-Oct) is a small museum that tells the story of the Stewart monarchy and the history of the town.

Just 150m south of the town centre lies the Union Canal and the pretty **Linlithgow Canal Centre** (☎ 671215; www.lucs.org.uk; Manse Rd Canal Basin; admission free; 🕒 2-5pm Sat & Sun Easter-Oct, plus 2-5pm Mon-Fri Jul & Aug), where a little museum records the history of the canal.

The centre runs three-hour **canal boat trips** (adult/child £6/3) west to the Avon Aqueduct departing at 2pm Saturday and Sunday, Easter to September, and occasionally to the **Falkirk Wheel** (see the boxed text, p206). Shorter 20-minute cruises (adult/child £2.50/1.50) leave every half hour during the centre's opening times.

EATING & DRINKING

Linlithgow has several good pubs and restaurants. The **Four Marys** (☎ 842171; 65-76 High St; mains £5-10; 🕒 food served noon-3pm & 5-9pm Mon-Fri, noon-9pm Sat & Sun) is an attractive traditional pub (opposite the palace entrance) that serves real ales and excellent pub grub, including haggis, neeps and tatties (haggis, mashed turnip and mashed potato). A few doors along the street is **Marynka** (☎ 840123; 57 High St; lunch mains £6-10; 🕒 noon-2pm & 6-10pm Tue-Sat), a pleasant little gourmet restaurant (two-/three-course dinner £22/26).

The rustic **Champany Inn** (☎ 834532; Champany; mains £15-25; 🕒 12.30-2pm & 7-10pm Mon-Fri, 7-10pm Sat) is a trencherman's delight, famous for its excellent Aberdeen Angus steaks and Scottish lobsters. The neighbouring **Chop & Ale House** (mains £8-16) is a less expensive alternative to the main dining room, offering delicious homemade burgers and steaks. The inn is 2 miles northeast of Linlithgow on the A803/A904 road towards Bo'ness and Queensferry.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Linlithgow is 15 miles west of Edinburgh, and is served by frequent trains from the capital (£3.70, 20 minutes, four every hour); the train station is 250m east of the town centre.

You can also cycle from Edinburgh to Linlithgow along the Union Canal towpath (21 miles); allow 1½ to two hours.