

Scotland





Edinburgh



Rising from the medieval muck of the Old Town, Edinburgh (pronounced *ed-inbra*) became respectable with the corseted grid of the New Town and has proven to be Scotland's most significant city throughout history. It's the older and, with the seat of government here, bossier sister to Glasgow, and the two cities have enjoyed a sibling rivalry that has Glaswegians sneering that Edinburgh is 'No' real Scotland'. But she's a cosmopolitan miss, hosting royalty from the dreaded south as often as Scottish kings in her long history, with every other building wearing a royal tag. While Glasgow got its hands dirty with shipbuilding and the tobacco trade, Edinburgh went to university with the Scottish Enlightenment and became one of the most sophisticated cities in the world.

Edinburgh's real charm is in her petite size, with much of the city centre lined between the castle that tops a volcanic crag, and the magnificent Arthur's Seat. While the random development of Princes St has caused many to scoff – newspapers rail against it as too trashily commercial, or not commercial enough with too many historical buildings preserved – the city's beauty has certainly endured. In August Edinburgh blooms with art at its ever-changing festivals that promise everything from stand-up comedy to sit-in installation art.

The city wears the mantle of capital casually, with a parliament that respectfully sinks into the ground next to stately Holyroodhouse. At the other end of the Royal Mile, however, the defiant symbol of Edinburgh Castle dominates a tough knuckle of land, reminding you from anywhere in the city that this proud old girl has never been a princess and can always put up a fight when she needs to.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Pondering the organic aesthetic of the **Scottish Parliament** (p756) and wondering what all the financial fuss was about
- Catching your breath at the top of **Arthur's Seat** (p756) only to have it taken away again by the views
- Discovering the new **Scottish cuisine** (p765) that's got foodies heading north of the border for fresh seafood and game
- Holding your ears for the booming One O'Clock Gun that makes you notice the majestic **Edinburgh Castle** (p752) wherever you are in the city
- Re-creating the final scenes of *The Da Vinci Code* at the fascinating **Rosslyn Chapel** (p772)
- Sampling some of Scotland's best dining with the equally stunning views and menus at the **Tower** (p765)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 0131

■ POPULATION: 430,000

HISTORY

Edinburgh grew up in the 11th century with the development of markets at the foot of the fortress, and from 1124 King David I held court at the castle and founded the abbey at Holyrood. The first effective town wall was constructed around 1450 and circled the Old Town and the Grassmarket. This well-defended zone became a medieval Manhattan, forcing densely packed inhabitants to build tenements that soared to 12 storeys.

The city played an important role in the Reformation, led by the firebrand John Knox, but later, when James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English crown in 1603, he moved the court to London. Edinburgh's importance waned, to be further reduced by the Act of Union in 1707.

Nonetheless, cultural and intellectual life flourished; during the Scottish Enlightenment (about 1740–1830) Edinburgh became known as 'a hotbed of genius'. In the second half of the 18th century a new city was created across the ravine to the north, and the population soon exploded. A new ring of crescents and circuses was built south of the New Town, and grey Victorian terraces sprang up. In the

20th century the poor that occupied the Old Town were moved into new housing estates further out – estates that now experience severe social problems.

A history of separatist feelings meant Scottish devolution was always on the cards. After a successful referendum held by the newly elected Labour Party in 1997, the first Scottish parliament since 1707 was convened in Edinburgh, a capital once more, on 12 May 1999. Under the leadership of Donald Dewar (1937–2000), who became the First Minister, the Labour Party formed a government in coalition with the Liberal Democrats. The Scottish National Party (SNP), with about 30% of the vote, became the second-largest party and de facto opposition, its biggest political success. Current First Minister, Jack McConnell, presided over the opening of the new Scottish Parliament building in 2004, but more recently garnered press attention for saying he'd support Trinidad and Tobago against England in the 2006 World Cup.

ORIENTATION

The city's most obvious landmarks are Arthur's Seat, southeast of the centre, and Edinburgh Castle at the western end of the

Old Town. The Old and New Towns are separated by Princes Street Gardens.

Edinburgh's main shopping street, Princes St, runs along the northern side of the gardens. At the garden's eastern end, Calton Hill is crowned by several monuments. The Royal Mile (Lawnmarket, High St and Canongate), the parallel equivalent in the Old Town, is roughly bookended by the Palace of Holyroodhouse to the east and the unmissable castle to the west.

See p771 for details on getting to/from the airport.

Maps

Lonely Planet publishes the *Edinburgh City Map*, with an index of streets and sights. Another useful, portable map with street index is the *Collins Central Edinburgh Street Atlas*, available at most bookshops and tourist offices.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Blackwell (Map pp754-5; ☎ 622 8222; www.blackwell.co.uk; 53 South Bridge; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 9.30am-8pm Tue, 9am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun)

Waterstone's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 2666; www.waterstones.co.uk; 128 Princes St; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-7pm Sun) The largest Edinburgh branch.

Emergency

Dial ☎ 999 or ☎ 112 for police, ambulance, fire brigade or coastguard.

Internet Access

As well as the places listed here, most hostels have a terminal, as do several cafés and libraries, and the tourist office.

Bytes & Slices (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 8887; 2 Waverley Steps; per hr £3; ☎ 8am-9pm) Near the train station, down the steps next to the Balmoral Hotel.

e-corner (Map pp754-5; ☎ 558 7858; 55 Blackfriars St; per hr £1.80; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm Sat & Sun)

easyInternetcafé (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 3580; 58 Rose St; per hr £2, day pass £3.50; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Sat, 9am-10pm Sun) Loads of machines, but little support and no access to USB ports.

Internet Café (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 5400; 98 West Bow; per hr £2; ☎ 10am-11pm)

Wired (Map pp750-1; www.wiredcafe.info; per hr £1.50; ☎ 9am-6pm) South Clerk St ☎ 667 9783; 27 South Clerk St) Brougham Pl ☎ 659 7820; 1 Brougham Pl)

Internet Resources

City of Edinburgh Council (www.edinburgh.gov.uk) Has an events guide.

Edinburgh Guide (www.edinburghguide.com) Theatre, film and events listings, plus a directory of useful links.

Laundry

Most of the backpacker hostels have a good-value laundry service. Otherwise, try **Ace Cleaning Centre** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 667 0549; 13 S Clerk St; around £5 per load; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun).

Left Luggage

Edinburgh airport left-luggage office (per item per 24hr £3; ☎ 5am-11pm) On the ground floor.

St Andrew Square bus and coach station lockers (Map pp754-5; small/medium/large locker per 24hr £3/4/5; ☎ 6am-midnight)

Waverley train station left-luggage office (Map pp754-5; per item per 24hr £5; ☎ 7am-11pm) Beside platform 1.

Libraries

Central Library (Map pp754-5; ☎ 242 8000; George IV Bridge; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Has free internet access.

Medical Services

Royal Infirmary (☎ 536 1000; Little France, Old Dalkeith Rd) Has 24-hour emergency.

Money

There are numerous banks with ATMs throughout the city, particularly around St Andrew Sq and George St. There's a bureau de change in the Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (ESIC), but post offices, banks and **Amex** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 718 2501; 69 George St) have better rates.

Post

Main post office (Map pp754-5; ☎ 0845 722 3344; St James Centre, Leith St)

Tourist Information

Edinburgh & Scotland Information Centre (ESIC; Map pp754-5; ☎ 0845 225 5121; www.edinburgh.org; 3 Princes St; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-8pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sun May, Jun & Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Wed, to 6pm Thu-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Oct-Apr) Does currency exchange, internet access and tour and bus tickets.

Tourist Information Desk (Edinburgh Airport; ☎ 6.30am-10.30pm) Near international arrivals.

Travel Agencies

STA Travel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 7747; www.statravel.co.uk; 27 Forrest Rd; ☎ Mon-Sat)

Student Flights (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 6868; www.studentflights.co.uk; 53 Forrest Rd; ☎ Mon-Sat)

EDINBURGH IN...

Two Days

Your first stop should be the **Old Town** (p752) for a wander up and down the history lesson of the **Royal Mile** (p752) to the **castle** (p752), hopefully beating the tour buses there. Walk back down the Royal Mile, lunch-bound, and turn right on to George IV Bridge. If you're hungry, **Maison Bleue** (p765) is just around the corner; for something lighter, the **Elephant House** (p764) will trumpet a welcome. Head back down the Royal Mile to check out **Holyroodhouse** (p756) and the **Scottish Parliament** (p756). In the evening, scare yourself with a guided walk by **Mercat Tours** (p761) or get your required reading done with a **literary pub crawl** (p761). Head across town for dinner at unpretentious **Fenwick's** (p765) and if you're still thirsty pop into **Borough** (p767).

In the morning, chase your hangover-beating **Irn Bru** (see p767) with the clean air of an ascent of **Arthur's Seat** (p756). Next, give the credit card some exercise by patrolling **Princes Street** (p769), stopping at the **Café Royal Circle Bar** (p767) for refreshment, if it's a nice day. Then head down to Leith – see the **royal yacht Britannia** (p759), and finish off your day with dinner at the **Vintners Room** (p766).

Four Days

Your third morning could be spent – depending on the weather – at either the **Royal Botanic Garden** (p759) or in the **National Gallery of Scotland** (p758) checking out what landscapes you're missing out on. From here, lunch in cobbled **Stockbridge** (p766) isn't too far away. An afternoon stroll up **Calton Hill** (p758) beckons, but then there's the beer garden at **Pear Tree House** (p767), and finally good-value eateries such as the **Forest** (p764).

On the fourth day, head to **Rosslyn Chapel** (p772), most enigmatic of buildings, or head out to **Craigmillar Castle** (p772), a sweet castle that's peaceful after busy Edinburgh. Top off your stay by sampling moreish comfort food at either **Monster Mash** (p766) or **L'Alba D'Oro** (p766).

- INFORMATION**
- 1 F4
 - 2 G5
 - 3 D4
- SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp752-59)**
- Edinburgh Book Festival Office.....4 B5
 - Holyrood Abbey.....5 H2
 - Holyrood Park.....6 G4
 - Our Dynamic Earth.....7 G3
 - Palace of Holyroodhouse.....8 H2
 - Queen's Gallery.....9 G2
 - Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.....10 A3
 - Scottish Parliament Building.....11 G3

STOCKBRIDGE

DEAN VILLAGE

WEST END

COATES

HAYMARKET

FOUNTAINBRIDGE

BRUNTSFIELD

MARCHMONT

MARCHMONT

GREENHILL

TO THE GANNY MAN'S (200M); FORTLAND HILLS (3.5M); ROSSLYN CHAPEL (7M)

- SLEEPING** (pp762-64)
- Afton Guest House.....12 C5
 - Amaryllis Guesthouse.....13 D5
 - Belford Hostel.....14 B3
 - Caravel Guest House.....15 E1
 - Christopher North House Hotel.....16 D2
 - Cluaran House.....17 D5
 - Dene Guest House.....18 D1
 - Dukes of Windsor Street.....19 G1
 - Greenhouse.....20 C5
 - Hopetoun.....21 G6
 - Kingsview Guest House.....22 D4
 - Original Raj.....23 A4
- EATING** (pp764-66)
- Apartment.....26 D5
 - Blue Moon Café.....27 F1
 - Elephants & Bagels.....28 D5
 - Engine Shed.....29 G4
 - Fenwick's Restaurant.....30 G5
 - L'Alba D'ora.....31 D1
 - Phuket Pavillion.....32 F1
 - Thai Me Up in Edinburgh.....(see 40)
- SOUTHSIDE GUEST HOUSE.....24 G5**
- TERRACE HOTEL.....25 G2**

BROUGHTON

NEW TOWN

REGENT GARDENS

WATERLOO PI

WAVERTY TRAIN STATION

EAST PRINCES STREET GARDENS

OLD TOWN

TOLLCROSS

THE MEADOWS

LEVEN SQUARE

ST LEONARD'S

NEWINGTON

BRUNTSFIELD LINKS

BRUNTSFIELD PARK

BRUNTSFIELD GOLF COURSE

PRESTONFIELD GOLF COURSE

TO INNOCENT RAILWAY CYCLE PATH (1M); SHEEP HED INN (2 M)

- DRINKING** (pp767-68)
- Antiquary.....33 D1
 - Barony Bar.....34 F1
 - Bennet's Bar.....35 D4
 - Borough.....36 F5
 - Cumberland Bar.....37 E1
 - Outhouse.....38 F1
 - Star Bar.....39 E2
 - Street.....40 F2
- ENTERTAINMENT** (pp768-69)
- Bongo Club.....41 G3
 - Cameo.....42 D4
 - CC Blooms.....43 F1
 - Ego.....44 F1
 - Hearts FC.....45 A5
 - Hibernian FC.....46 H1
 - Planet Out.....47 F1
 - Queen's Hall.....48 F5
- SHOPPING** (pp769-70)
- Joey D.....49 F1
 - Leith Army Stores.....50 G1
- TRANSPORT**
- Arnold Clark Car Hire.....51 D4
 - Bike Trax.....52 D4

SIGHTS

Many of Edinburgh's must-sees are concentrated around the Old Town, the focus of which is the Royal Mile, and, north of here across a deep valley, the New Town, with its elegant and well-ordered streets.

Old Town

EDINBURGH CASTLE

Dug into an extinct black volcano, **Edinburgh Castle** (HS; Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 9846; Castlehill; adult/child £9.80/3.50; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Mar; 🗺️) lords it over Scotland's capital and is an icon of Scottish nationhood. Its grey magnificence is visible from nearly every part of the city, and it makes its presence felt when the One O'Clock Gun booms from the battlements.

The castle is the heart of Edinburgh. The commanding and inaccessible position was fortified from prehistoric times for its obvious strategic advantage, and has been crucial in the struggles between Scotland and the 'auld enemy' south of the border. Captured by the English during the Wars of Independence (1174-1356), the castle was razed by Robert the Bruce as part of his scorched earth retreat. Edward III and David II both took turns at rebuilding. Aside from the ruins of David's Tower, little of this work survives; strengthening and renovation of the castle continued into the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The castle last saw military action in 1745, but it served as the British army's main base in Scotland until the 1920s.

Inside, the most interesting sights include: the **Stone of Destiny** (p757); **St Margaret's Chapel** (the oldest building in Edinburgh), a simple stone building probably built by David I or Alexander I around 1130 in memory of their mother; the **palace** (including the Scottish Crown Jewels); and the **National War Museum of Scotland** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 7534; admission incl in Edinburgh Castle ticket; 🕒 9.45am-5.30pm Apr-Nov, to 4.30pm Dec-Mar), a good account of how war and military service have shaped the nation.

During the Edinburgh Festival, the castle forecourt becomes a grandstand for the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The castle is especially busy then, but throughout the year it's worth visiting early in the morning or late in the afternoon to avoid the peak periods.

ROYAL MILE

Running along the ridge from Edinburgh Castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the rough cobbles of the **Royal Mile** make up one of the world's

most romantic streets. Closets (entrances) and wynds (lanes) seduce you down either side for deeper explorations. Sure, there are tacky souvenir shops and tourist crowds, but when the rain lashes down and tourists flee into the pubs, the street feels like it hasn't changed for a thousand years. Between the royal flush at either end, there's a deck of exceptional buildings shuffling through history since the 15th century in the shape of museums and pubs, while during the festival it plays the joker with rough-and-tumble street theatre.

Elegant tenement buildings once housed all manner of Edinburgh society in an unhygienic bedlam that earned the medieval metropolis its 'Auld Reekie' nickname. Underneath, the poor lived as best they could in a warren of vaults and cellars, some of which can be visited on spooky night tours (see p761).

At the top of the Royal Mile, the **Camera Obscura** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 3709; Outlook Tower, Castlehill; adult/child £6.45/4.15; 🕒 9.30am-7pm Jul & Aug, 9.30am-6pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar) offers great views over the city from inside the Outlook Tower. It was originally a Victorian curiosity, whereby a system of mirrors and lenses projects a colour image of the city onto a white table. On the way up the stairs there's an intriguing display of holograms and optical illusions: the whole visit offers plenty of charm.

Further down the hill, the **Highland Tolbooth Kirk**, with its 73m spire, is an icon of the city's skyline. It was built in the 1840s by James Graham and Augustus Pugin (one of the architects of London's Houses of Parliament) and contains the Hub ticket centre (see p761).

A characteristic Old Town tenement building, **Gladstone's Land** (NTS; Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 5856; 477 Lawnmarket; adult/child £5/4; 🕒 10am-7pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Easter-Jun, Sep & Oct) is a fascinating glimpse into the past. The narrow, six-storey house was built in the mid-16th century and extended around 1617 by wealthy merchant Thomas Gledstanes. The best room is the Painted Chamber with its fabulous painted roof, dating back to 1620, and ornate oak furniture. One of the oldest surviving tenements is the **John Knox House** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 9579; 43-45 High St; adult/child £3/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Sat), a classic structure built in 1490 and probable home of the father of the Scottish Reformation, John Knox.

Nearby, tucked in a close, the **Writers' Museum** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 529 4901; Lady Stair's Close, Lawnmarket; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat year-round, noon-5pm Sun Aug) is housed in **Lady Stair's House**

(built in 1622) and contains manuscripts and memorabilia from Scotland's big three literati: Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Parliament Square, largely filled by St Giles Cathedral, is on High St, the middle segment of the Royal Mile. This was the heart of Edinburgh until the 18th century, and a cobbled-stoned **Heart of Midlothian** is set in the ground. Passers-by traditionally spit on it for luck.

The 19th-century **Mercat Cross** replaced the original 1365 cross, marking the spot where merchants and traders transacted business and royal proclamations were read.

Looming over High St, **St Giles Cathedral** (Map pp754-5; High St; admission free, donations encouraged; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Oct-Apr, 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 1-7pm Sun May-Sep) has giant stained-glass windows providing a kaleidoscope of colour (even on a dull day), and rows of hexagonal columns and crowning arches crisscrossing their way along the length of the building.

Inside is a **statue of John Knox**, minister from 1559 to 1572; he preached his uncompromis-

ing Calvinist message and launched the Scottish Reformation from here. The new austerity this ushered in led to changes in the building's interior – decorations, altars and the relics of St Giles were thrown into the Nor Loch, a lake-cum-cesspit that fostered disease where Princes Street Gardens and Waverley train station now stand.

The **Real Mary King's Close** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 0870 243 0160; 2 Warriston's Close; adult/child £8/6; 🕒 9am-9pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Sun-Fri & 10am-9pm Sat Nov-Mar) penetrates the underground world beneath the Old Town. The spooky visit is accompanied by costumed characters who retell their life stories. The grimmer is a man whose job was burying plague victims.

The Royal Mile continues below High St as Canongate. A fine example of 16th-century architecture, **Canongate Tolbooth** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 529 4057; 163 Canongate; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat year-round, 2-5pm Sun Aug) has picturesque turrets and a projecting clock. It served in turn as a collection point for tolls, a council house, a courtroom and a jail. It now houses

AULD READIE: A LITERARY LOOK AROUND EDINBURGH

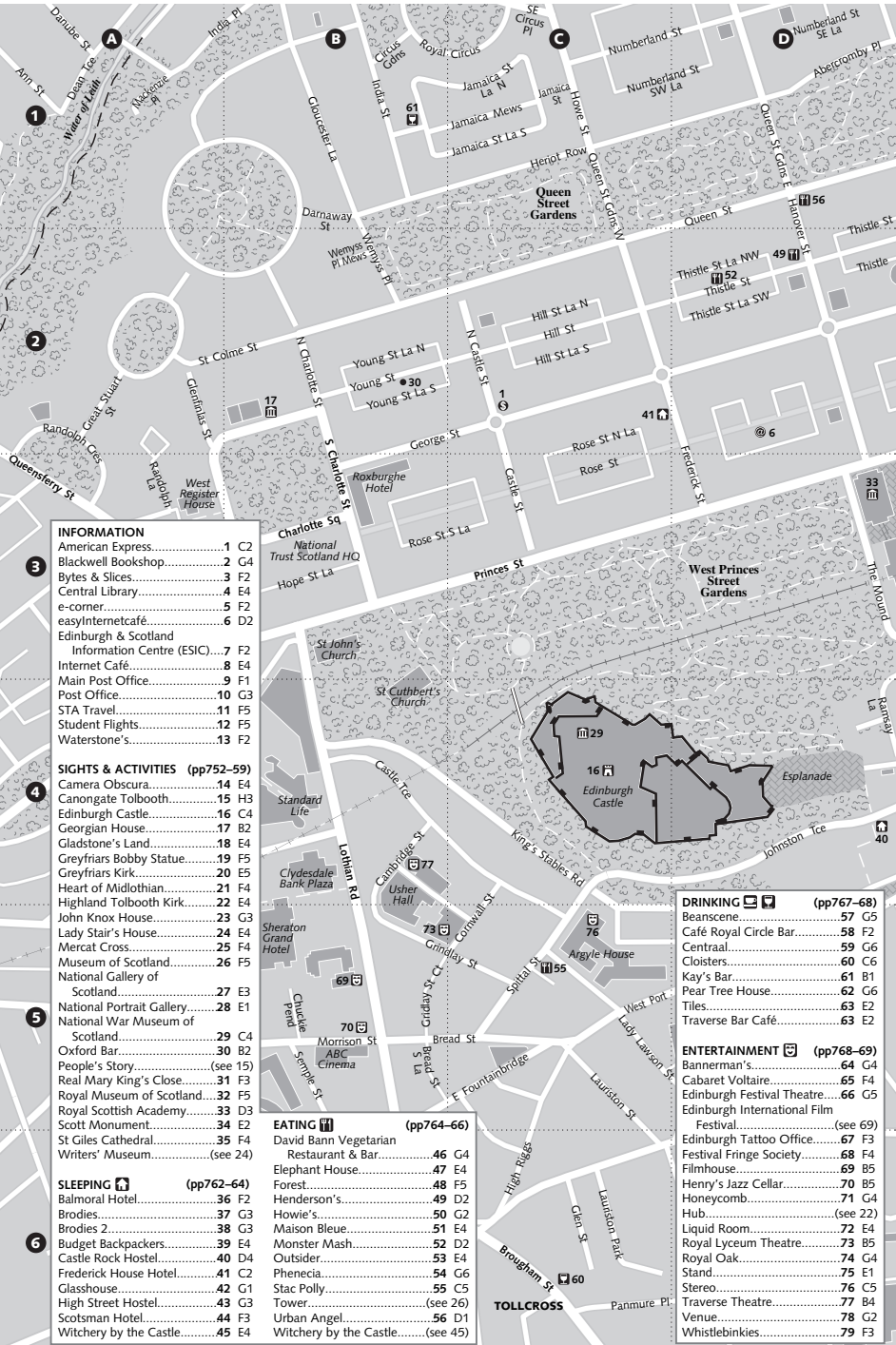
Ever the leading literary light of the north, Edinburgh has produced more than its fair share of writers. Many speculate that it's the wet weather that keeps them inside scribbling, but whatever the reason, the city is packed with literary destinations.

Any tour of the city's should start at the Writers' Museum (opposite), which covers Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. Downstairs there's a cabinet made by Deacon Brodie, a nefarious character whose life informed Stevenson's work. A mild-mannered cabinetmaker by day, Brodie had a double life that saw him in brothels and gambling dens most nights. To pay off his debts he took on a nocturnal life of crime, robbing around town for two years before being caught plundering the General Excise Office. According to local legend, ironically he ended up being hanged on a gallows that he'd designed and built. Stevenson was fascinated with the tale, writing a play, *Deacon Brodie or the Double Life* (1880), and later pursuing the idea of dual identities in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).

Stevenson was just one of a number of graduates of Edinburgh University to pen novels. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, commemorated with a statue of the most famous proponent of the deerstalker hat, was a classmate of Stevenson. Many believe that Doyle based Sherlock Holmes on a university lecturer, Dr Joseph Bell, who encouraged keen observation as a way of diagnosing patients and may even have muttered 'It was elementary' to explain his more brilliant pieces of medicine.

Recently another writer looked to Edinburgh for inspiration. A divorced single mum sat drinking coffee in the Elephant House café (p764) and while her daughter slept wrote a manuscript that must have been inspired by Edinburgh's magical castle. In 2005 JK Rowling would return the compliment to the city with a packed reading of her *Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince* book from Edinburgh Castle (opposite).

Less fantastic, the hard-boiled writer Ian Rankin bases his Inspector Rebus novels in Edinburgh: the crime-solver has eaten at Fenwick's (p765) and usually solves his cases in the grungy grandeur of the **Oxford Bar** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 539 7119; 8 Young St; 🕒 11am-1am Mon-Sat, 12.30pm-1am Sun). Rebus has become so popular that Rankin has written a non-fiction book, *Rebus's Scotland*, in which he follows his own fictional detective around.



- INFORMATION**
- American Express.....1 C2
 - Blackwell Bookshop.....2 G4
 - Bytes & Slices.....3 F2
 - Central Library.....4 E4
 - e-corner.....5 F2
 - easyInternetcafé.....6 D2
 - Edinburgh & Scotland
 - Information Centre (ESIC).....7 F2
 - Internet Café.....8 E4
 - Main Post Office.....9 F1
 - Post Office.....10 G3
 - STA Travel.....11 F5
 - Student Flights.....12 F5
 - Waterstone's.....13 F2

- SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp752-59)**
- Camera Obscura.....14 E4
 - Canongate Tolbooth.....15 H3
 - Edinburgh Castle.....16 C4
 - Georgian House.....17 B2
 - Gladstone's Land.....18 E4
 - Greyfriars Bobby Statue.....19 F5
 - Greyfriars Kirk.....20 E5
 - Heart of Midlothian.....21 F4
 - Highland Tolbooth Kirk.....22 E4
 - John Knox House.....23 G3
 - Lady Stair's House.....24 E4
 - Mercat Cross.....25 F4
 - Museum of Scotland.....26 F5
 - National Gallery of Scotland.....27 E3
 - National Portrait Gallery.....28 E1
 - National War Museum of Scotland.....29 C4
 - Oxford Bar.....30 B2
 - People's Story.....(see 15)
 - Real Mary King's Close.....31 F3
 - Royal Museum of Scotland.....32 F5
 - Royal Scottish Academy.....33 D3
 - Scott Monument.....34 E2
 - St Giles Cathedral.....35 F4
 - Writers' Museum.....(see 24)

- EATING (pp764-66)**
- David Bain Vegetarian Restaurant & Bar.....46 G4
 - Forest.....48 F5
 - Henderson's.....49 D2
 - Howie's.....50 G2
 - Maison Bleue.....51 E4
 - Monster Mash.....52 D2
 - Castle Rock Hostel.....40 D4
 - Frederick House Hotel.....41 C2
 - Glasshouse.....42 G1
 - High Street Hostel.....43 G3
 - Scotsman Hotel.....44 F3
 - Witchery by the Castle.....45 E4
 - Witchery by the Castle.....(see 45)

- DRINKING (pp767-68)**
- Beanscene.....57 G5
 - Café Royal Circle Bar.....58 F2
 - Central.....59 G6
 - Cloisters.....60 C6
 - Kay's Bar.....61 B1
 - Pear Tree House.....62 G6
 - Tiles.....63 E2
 - Traverse Bar Café.....63 E2

- ENTERTAINMENT (pp768-69)**
- Bannerman's.....64 G4
 - Cabaret Voltaire.....65 F4
 - Edinburgh Festival Theatre.....66 G5
 - Edinburgh International Film Festival.....(see 69)
 - Festival Tattoo Office.....67 F3
 - Festival Fringe Society.....68 F4
 - Filmhouse.....69 B5
 - Henry's Jazz Cellar.....70 B5
 - Honeycomb.....71 G4
 - Hub.....(see 22)
 - Liquid Room.....72 E4
 - Royal Lyceum Theatre.....73 B5
 - Royal Oak.....74 G4
 - Stand.....75 E1
 - Stereo.....76 C5
 - Traverse Theatre.....77 B4
 - Venue.....78 G2
 - Whistlebinkies.....79 F3



- SHOPPING (pp769-70)**
- 21st Century Kilts.....80 G3
 - Armstrong's.....81 E4
 - Avalanche Records 1.....82 G6
 - Avalanche Records 2.....83 F3
 - Fopp.....84 F3
 - Harvey Nichols.....85 E1
 - Jenners.....86 E2
 - Royal Mile Whiskies.....87 F4

- TRANSPORT**
- Edinburgh Bus Station.....88 F1
 - Edinburgh Cycle Hire & Scottish Cycle Safaris.....89 G3

an absorbing museum, the **People's Story**, relating the story of the life, work and pastimes of ordinary Edinburgh folk from the late 18th century to the present.

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Built on the site of a former brewery, the **Scottish Parliament** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 348 5000; www.scottish.parliament.uk; Holyrood Rd; admission free, tours adult/concession £3.50/1.75; ♿ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun year-round, plus 9am-7pm on days when Parliament is in session, normally Tue-Thu Sep-Jun; 🇬🇧) is the newest building in the Old Town, with a curiously organic design that, according to architect Enric Miralles, is about 'sitting in the land' on this strip where other buildings seem to challenge the majesty of Arthur's Seat.

Scots are slowing their complaints about the cost of a project that they feel created an unexceptional building next to great landmarks such as Holyroodhouse, and are starting to appreciate the parliament building on its own merits. The **Canongate Wall** (on the northern side) is studded with stones from across Scotland and inscribed with quotations from Scottish literature. It's well worth taking a tour of the beautifully lit interior, as it will get you access to the upper levels and committee rooms, which offer excellent views.

PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE & HOLYROOD ABBEY

Developed from a guesthouse attached to medieval Holyrood Abbey, the **Palace of Holyroodhouse** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 1096; adult/child £8.80/4.80 not incl Queen's Gallery, adult/child £11/5.50 incl Queen's Gallery; ♿ 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-4.30pm Nov-Mar) is the monarch's official residence in Scotland, so you won't be able to visit when the Queen is in town.

The **abbey** (Map pp750-1), founded by David I in 1128, was probably named after a fragment of the cross (*rood* is an old word for cross) said to have belonged to his mother, St Margaret. Most of the surviving ruins date from the 12th and 13th centuries, although a doorway in the far southeastern corner survives from the original Norman church.

James IV extended the abbey guesthouse in 1501; the oldest surviving section of the building, the northwestern tower, was built in 1529 as a royal apartment. Mary Queen of Scots spent six eventful years living in the tower. During this time she married Darnley (in the abbey) and Bothwell (in what is now the Picture Gal-

lery), and this is where she debated with John Knox and witnessed the murder of her secretary (and possible lover) Rizzio. Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed here in 1745 and during the same century France's soon-to-be King Charles X hid out here during the French Revolution. It wasn't until Queen Victoria's reign that British monarchy returned to the castle, with her grandson George V modernising it substantially.

The tour of the palace, first opened to the public in 1854, is unforgettable. The **Queen's Gallery** strolls through 89 portraits of Scottish kings, an unbroken lineage that dates back to the Egyptian pharaohs. **Mary Queen of Scots' Bed Chamber** in the 16th-century tower gives an insight into courtly romances – it connects via a secret staircase to her husband Lord Darnley's room. It was on this staircase that the Queen watched as Rizzio was stabbed 56 times for his possible affair with the Queen. To soothe such woes, the Queen may have retreated to **Queen Mary's Bath House**, a turreted lodge where she was believed to have bathed in white wine.

HOLYROOD PARK & ARTHUR'S SEAT

Edinburgh is blessed with having wilderness on its doorstep. Holyrood Park (Map pp750-1) covers 260 hectares of varied landscape, including mountains, moorland, lochs and fields, and contains some rare plants and insects. The highest point is the 251m-high extinct volcano, Arthur's Seat.

You can circumnavigate the park by car or bike and it has several excellent walks; the hike to the summit is the city's best and takes less than an hour, with a clear path all the way.

OUR DYNAMIC EARTH

Looking like a giant white crab, this interactive **museum** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 550 7800; www.dynamicearth.co.uk; Holyrood Rd; adult/child £8.95/5.45; ♿ 10am-5pm Apr-Jun & Sep-Oct, 10am-6pm Jul-Aug, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun Nov-Mar; 🇬🇧) sits in the shadow of the brooding Salisbury Crags. While some say it's too much of a science theme park, it does make the environment and geology fun, with simulated journeys to the centre of the earth or exploring coral reefs. The earthquake machine will make scaredy cats shiver.

South of the Royal Mile GRASSMARKET & AROUND

Dominated by the looming castle, this touristy enclave of restaurants and pubs can get frantic at weekends. This cheery spot was

STONE OF DESTINY

Believed to have accompanied the Scots in all their mythical journeys, the original Stone of Destiny (the Fatal Stone) was a carved block of sandstone brought to Scotland by missionaries from Ireland. In AD 838 it was eventually placed in the abbey at Scone, a couple of miles north of Perth, where for the next four and a half centuries Scottish monarchs were invested upon it.

Stolen by Edward I in 1296, this venerable talisman was incorporated into the Coronation Chair, used by English (and later British) monarchs, in Westminster Abbey. That is, until a plucky band of Scottish students re-abducted the Stone on Christmas Day 1950 and smuggled it back to Scotland, dropping and breaking it on the way (it was patched up by a stonemason).

King George VI was 'sorely troubled about the loss', but three months later the stone turned up on the altar of the ruined Arbroath Abbey. Before the public was aware that the stone had even been found, it was back in London. No charges were brought, and Ian Hamilton – who led this jolly caper and later became a prominent QC – published his story in *The Taking of the Stone of Destiny*.

In 1996 the sandstone block was returned to Scotland, but it now resides in Edinburgh Castle rather than at the site of the abbey in Scone.

Many Scots, however, hold that the original stone is safely hidden somewhere in Scotland and that Edward I was fobbed off with an imitation. This is possibly true – descriptions of the original stone state that it was decorated with intricate carvings. But given that Scottish nationalism is running high, this powerful symbol of Scotland would surely have been brought out by now.

once the main place for public executions and more than 100 hanged Covenanters are commemorated with a cross at the eastern end. The 19th-century murderers William Burke and William Hare infamously enticed at least 18 victims into their boarding house here, suffocated them and sold the cadavers to Edinburgh's medical schools – a lesson to anyone looking for too-good-to-be-true accommodation in the capital.

The Grassmarket can be approached from George IV Bridge via **Victoria Street**, an unusual two-tiered street clinging to the ridge below the Royal Mile. The **Cowgate** runs parallel to the Royal Mile off the eastern end of the Grassmarket, under the George IV and South Bridges, and is a tunnel of nightlife and alleyways.

GREYFRIARS KIRK & KIRKYARD

At the bottom of a stone canyon of tenements, churches, volcanic cliffs and the castle, Greyfriars Kirkyard is one of Edinburgh's most evocative spots – a peaceful sanctuary of solemn memorials against a dramatic skyline.

The **church** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 5429; www.greyfriarskirk.com; Candlemaker Row; admission free; ♿ 10.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri & 10.30am-2.30pm Sat Apr-Oct, 1.30-3.30pm Thu Nov-Mar) was built over a Franciscan friary and opened for worship in 1620. The National Covenant was signed here in 1638, affirming the independence of the Scottish Church from Charles I's attempts to reintroduce episco-

pacy. Many of those who signed were later executed and, in 1679, 1200 Covenanters were held prisoner in terrible conditions in an enclosure in the yard.

More heartwarming, the churchyard holds the remains of **Greyfriars Bobby** (Map pp754-5), a tenacious Skye terrier who, from 1858 to 1872, maintained a vigil over his master's grave being fed and cared for by locals. The story of loyalty, immortalised in a novel by Eleanor Atkinson, was later turned into a Disney film. Tour groups congregate on the street outside, around a humble statue of the faithful pup.

ROYAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND & MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

These two **museums** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 247 4219; www.nms.ac.uk; Chambers St; admission free except special exhibits; ♿ 10am-5pm Mon & Wed-Sat, 10am-8pm Tue, noon-5pm Sun; 🇬🇧) make a very good couple.

The Royal Museum of Scotland, with its bright, airy, sun-roofed hall, is a Victorian building housing a comprehensive collection covering the natural world; archaeology; Chinese, Islamic and European decorative art; and even technology. Next door, the beautifully integrated, modern, sandstone Museum of Scotland explores the history of Scotland in chronological order, starting with the country's earliest history in the basement and finishing with the most recent on the top floor. It has an emphasis on interactivity that always wows kids.

New Town

Over the deep valley of Princes Street Gardens, the 18th-century New Town runs along a parallel ridge to the Old Town, separated by the gully of the gardens. The elegant Georgian terraces and formal street grid contrast with the tangled confusion of streets of the Old Town.

It was born out of the 18th-century need to make over the crowded city that had changed little since the Middle Ages, and the architectural change coincided with the Scottish Enlightenment, drawing on the pragmatism in its design – hence the strict grid. The draining of disease-producing Nor Loch and the building of North Bridge revolutionised the city.

The New Town grew rapidly and continued to sprout squares, circuses, parks and terraces; some of its finest neoclassical architecture was designed by Robert Adam.

CALTON HILL

Rising above Edinburgh's stately skyline, **Calton Hill** is strewn with grandiose Athenian-style memorials mostly dating from the first half of the 19th century as Scottish Enlightenment figures such as David Hume were commemorated after their deaths. An out-of-place monument to Abraham Lincoln acknowledges the role of Scottish Americans in the American Civil War.

The summit affords tremendous views of Edinburgh, taking in a panorama from Holyrood Park to the Firth of Forth.

PRINCES STREET

Princes St is a retail thoroughfare with views across the gardens to the castle and the jumble of striking façades that line the Old Town.

About midway down Princes St, the massive Gothic spire of the **Scott Monument** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 529 4068; admission £3; ☞ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat & 10am-6pm Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-3pm Mon-Sat & 10am-3pm Sun Oct-Mar), built by public subscription after Sir Walter Scott's death in 1832, testifies to his popularity. You enter this brooding edifice via Princes Street Gardens and climb 287 steps up a narrow winding staircase. From the top there are good views of the city.

Princes Street Gardens, home of a colourful Christmas market and ice rink in December, are cut by the **Mound** – a huge pile of earth dumped during the construction of the New Town, which provides a road link between the Old and New Towns.

Housed in a stunning church, the **National Portrait Gallery** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 624 6200; 1 Queen St; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Fri-Wed, 10am-7pm Thu) has a collection of portraiture (paintings and sculpture) that captures the good side of every Scot from Robert the Bruce to Robbie Coltrane.

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY & NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND

The Grecian-style **Royal Scottish Academy** (RSA; Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 6671; www.royalscottishacademy.org; The Mound; admission free except for special exhibitions; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun; ☎), built in 1826, features a sleek underground exhibition space and shopping strip linked to its neighbour, the National Gallery. The Academy is devoted to exhibiting Scottish art (usually of a very high standard) by RSA members as well as regular visiting exhibitions.

The **National Gallery of Scotland** (Map pp754-5; ☎ 624 6200; www.nationalgalleries.org; The Mound; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Fri-Wed, 10am-7pm Thu; ☎) is another imposing neoclassical building, housing a significant collection of European art. There are paintings by masters from the Renaissance to the Impressionists, including Titian's *Three Ages of Man* and Monet's *Haystacks*, but the works of Scottish artists – especially landscapes by William MacTaggart – warrant a long look.

GEORGE STREET & CHARLOTTE SQUARE

George St was originally envisaged as the main thoroughfare of the residential New Town. It's now home to highly successful Scottish financial institutions. It runs from St Andrew Sq (home of Harvey Nichols and the bus station) in the east to Charlotte Sq in the west.

The latter square was designed in 1791 by Robert Adam and is regarded as the jewel of the New Town. On the northern side of the square is a Georgian masterpiece, Bute House at number 6, the official residence of Scotland's First Minister. Next door, the **Georgian House** (NTS; Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 2160; 7 Charlotte Sq; adult/child £5/4; ☞ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 11am-3pm Nov, Dec & Mar) has been beautifully restored and refurbished to show how Edinburgh's elite lived at the end of the 18th century, when the New Town was first settled. A 35-minute video brings it all to life.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART

Just beyond Edinburgh's West End, the western extension of the New Town, this bright, mod-

ern **gallery** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 624 6200; www.nationalgalleries.org; 75 Belford Rd; admission free; ☞ 10am-5pm Fri-Wed, 10am-7pm Thu) is housed in an impressive classical building surrounded by a sculpture park. The collection concentrates on 20th-century art, with works by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, René Magritte and Henry Moore among others. Most space is given to Scottish painters and it's small enough not to overwhelm. To get here, take bus 13 from George St.

Northern Edinburgh

The New Town's Georgian architecture extends north to **Stockbridge**, one of the most pleasant suburbs to wander through – it's quite trendy but has retained a village-like charm that gives it a distinct, vibrant identity. There are plenty of shops, restaurants and pubs here.

North of Stockbridge, the lovely **Royal Botanic Garden** (☎ 552 7171; www.rbge.org.uk; 20a Inverleith Row; admission free; ☞ 10am-dusk; ☎) is the second-oldest institution of its kind, with 70 landscaped hectares that are well worth a stroll for their exotic plants, colourful rhododendrons and views of Edinburgh's skyline. Buses 8, 17, 23, 27 and 37 pass the gardens.

LEITH

Colourful Leith is Edinburgh's main port, although it remained an independent burgh until the 1920s. It's still among Britain's busiest ports but in the 1960s and '70s it fell into a sad state – abandoned to colonial housing and frequented by drug dealers that inspired *Trainspotting*. A recent revival means that it's now home to many of the city's best pubs and restaurants.

Parts of this neighbourhood are still a little rough but it's a distinctive, colourful corner of Edinburgh. The prettiest area is around The Shore.

The **royal yacht Britannia** (☎ 555 5566; www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk; Ocean Dr, Leith; adult/child £9/5; ☞ 9.30am-4.30pm Apr-Sep, 10am-3.30pm Oct-Mar; ☎), moored by the new Ocean Terminal shopping complex, was used for royal travels abroad from 1953 until its decommissioning in 1997. This monument to 1950s style and décor offers an intriguing insight into remarkably simple royal tastes. Exploration is via self-guided multilingual audio tour.

Buses 11, 22, 34 and 35 depart from St Andrew Sq to Leith regularly, with a bus for *Britannia* leaving regularly from Waverley Bridge outside the train station.

ACTIVITIES

Edinburgh has several spots to escape the city bustle on foot or two wheels. An obvious choice is Holyrood Park, where walkers ascend **Arthur's Seat** for spectacular views; a road runs right around the base of the volcano for an easy break right by the Royal Mile. From the southern side of the park, **Innocent Railway Cycle Path** runs eastwards to Musselburgh (5 miles).

You can walk or cycle along the wooded riverbanks of the **Water of Leith**, which runs from the Pentland Hills 20 miles down to the city centre, and on to Leith. There are access points and signposts throughout its length: one of the best short walks is from Stockbridge to historic Dean Village, where the waterway is spanned by a Thomas Telford bridge.

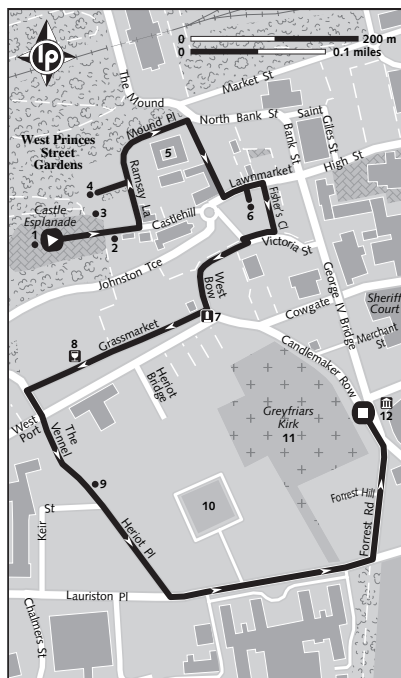
WALKING TOUR

The Old Town – the medieval part of town – stretches along the Royal Mile to the east of the castle and southwards to the Grassmarket and Greyfriars. This walk delves into the Old Town's many interesting nooks and crannies, and involves a fair bit of climbing steep stairs and closes.

Begin on the **Castle Esplanade (1)**, which affords grandstand views southwards over the Grassmarket; the prominent quadrangular building with all the turrets is George Heriot's School, which you'll pass later on. Head towards 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 (2)** because of the iron ball lodged in the wall (look between, 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 western wall is the **Witches Well (3)**, where a modern bronze fountain commemorates around 4000 people (mostly women) who were burned or strangled in Edinburgh between 1479 and 1722 on suspicion of witchcraft.

Go past the reservoir and turn left down Ramsay Lane, and take a look at **Ramsay Garden (4)** – 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



WALK FACTS

Start Castle Esplanade
Finish Museum of Scotland
Distance 1.5 miles
Duration one to two hours

Allan Ramsay. The cobbled street continues around to the right below student residences, to the twin towers of the **New College (5)** – home to Edinburgh University’s Faculty of Divinity. Nip into the courtyard to see the statue of John Knox (p753).

Just past New College, turn right and climb up the stairs into Milne’s Court, a student residence that houses the public entrance to what was once the temporary home of the Scottish Parliament. Exit into the Lawmarket, cross the street (bearing slightly left) and duck into **Riddell’s Court (6)** at number 322–8, 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 inscription in the doorway on

the right). The arch (with the inscription ‘VIV-ENDO 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 Tce, strung above the cobbled curve of shop-lined Victoria St. Wander right, enjoying the view, then descend the stairs at the foot of Upper Bow and continue downhill to the Grassmarket (p756). At the eastern end, outside Maggie Dickson’s pub, is the **Covenanters’ Monument (7)**; if you’re feeling peckish, there are several good places to eat and a couple of good pubs – legendary poet Robert Burns once stayed at the **White Hart Inn (8)**.

At the west end of the Grassmarket, turn left up the flight of stairs known as the Vennel. At the top of the steps on the left you’ll find the **Flodden Wall (9)**. Follow its extension, the Telfer Wall, to Lauriston Pl and turn left along the impressive façade of **George Heriot’s School (10)**, which was founded in 1628. This is the back of the building – the front was designed to face the castle and impress the inhabitants of the Grassmarket.

Finish off your walk with a stroll through **Greyfriars Kirkyard (11)**; p757) to inspect the grave of Robert Adam, the architect responsible for some of the New Town’s more impressive buildings. If you still need to stretch your legs, wander the halls of the **Museum of Scotland (12)**; p757) or enjoy dinner at Tower restaurant (p765).

EDINBURGH FOR CHILDREN

Littles love Edinburgh for its spooky medieval look and Harry Potter associations (see the boxed text, p753) and there’s plenty of attractions that cater for them.

The *List* (www.list.co.uk) has a special kids section listing activities and events in and around Edinburgh. A good time to visit is during the **Children’s International Theatre Festival** (☎ 225 8050; www.imaginate.org.uk) in late May.

On sunny days (yeah, right) you can hit the Edinburgh Zoo (p771) or wander through the Royal Botanic Garden (p759). Visiting Greyfriars Bobby’s statue (p757) is a great chance to tell the story of the 1961 Disney movie of the same name (which you can rent before you go).

When it’s raining you can visit the Museum of Scotland (p757), which has hands-on fun at the Discovery Centre; or let thrill-seekers try the earthquake simulator at Our Dynamic

Earth (p756), or tour the haunted Real Mary King’s Close (p753). For a few more educational fast rides the Connect section at the Royal Museum of Scotland (p757) is a new interactive area with robots that explore alien planets plus the chance to be a Formula 1 driver.

Older children will appreciate the bird’s-eye view of the Camera Obscura (p752) and the cartoons at the National Portrait Gallery (p758). And if you want to burn some excess energy out of teenagers, Adrian’s City Cycle Tour (below) gets the thumbs up from readers.

TOURS

You can check out a variety of bus tours, most of which take in the various sites, at the Edinburgh Tours website (www.edinburgh-tour.com). These recommended bus tours all depart from Waverley Bridge:

City Sightseeing Edinburgh (☎ 220 0770; www.city-sightseeing.com; 1hr tours adult/child £9/3; ☹ 9am–4pm) Famous open-topped buses that are hop-on, hop-off to most sights.

Mac Tours (☎ 220 0770; www.mactours.co.uk; adult/child £9/3; ☹ 9.45am–4pm) Similar tours in vintage buses.

Majestic Tour (☎ 220 0770; adult/child £9/3) Runs to the royal yacht *Britannia* at Ocean Terminal via the Royal Botanic Garden and Newhaven, returning via Leith Walk, Holyrood and the Royal Mile. Call ahead for hours.

If you’re up for a stroll, Edinburgh’s cobbled streets offer plenty of good walking tours: **Edinburgh Literary Pub Tour** (☎ 0800 169 7410; www.edinburghliterarypubtour.co.uk; adult £8; ☹ tours 7.30pm) Making the tenuous connection between great writing and hard liquor, this great tour is hosted by intellectual McBrain and yobbish wit Clart. Discounts for web purchase. Tour length depends on drinking time; allow at least two hours.

Mercat Tours (☎ 557 6464; www.mercattours.com; 1½hr tours adult/child £7/£3.50; ☹ tours 7pm & 8pm) Takes spooky trips into Edinburgh’s excavated underground closes and vaults, which have been the site of many reported supernatural phenomena.

Trainspotting Tours (☎ 0131-555 2500; www.leithwalks.co.uk; adult £8) Not just for Irvine Welsh fans as it wanders Leith with humour and history; check website for tour days.

If you’re still feeling active, the highly recommended three-hour **Adrian’s City Cycle Tour** (☎ 07966 447206; www.edinburghcycletour.com; tours adult/child £15/5; ☹ tours 10am & 2.30pm) takes you on a 5-mile ride around the city; meet by the gates of Holyroodhouse, but phone ahead to ensure bikes are available.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

No other city in Britain could claim to be the festival city like Edinburgh, with its events for books, music and... errr, fringes. Most events cluster around August, when accommodation books up, streets fill with costumed hawkers proffering show pamphlets, and parking in the city would just be silly. You can find listings for all of Edinburgh’s festivals on the umbrella website www.edinburgh-festivals.com.

The three-week **Edinburgh International Festival** is the world’s largest arts festival, with music, theatre, dance and a hundred other arts genres. Pre-booking is a must, with the programme published in March. The festival office **Hub** (Map pp754–5; ☎ 473 2000; www.eif.co.uk; Highland Tolbooth Kirk, Castlehill; ☹ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat) offers programmes, discount vouchers and tickets. If you haven’t planned ahead, half-price tickets to some performances may be sold on the day at the Hub.

Running almost simultaneously is the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe**, an experimental extravaganza of would-be stars and avant-garde performances. The repertoire is eclectic and while stand-up comedy dominates, you can see shows from chainsaw juggling to kitten smuggling. Booking is essential and tickets cost from £5 to £10; during the first two days the box office holds a two-for-one ticket frenzy and the *Scotsman* newspaper offers two-for-one vouchers every day in its Festival Guide. There’s also a hundred completely free shows, a month of street theatre on the Royal Mile and Fringe Sunday. Programmes and tickets are available, from June, from the **Festival Fringe Society** (Map pp754–5; ☎ 226 0000; www.edfringe.com; 180 High St).

Also in August, the hugely popular **Edinburgh Military Tattoo** is a lavish event of regimental displays from around the Commonwealth on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. Contact the **Edinburgh Tattoo Office** (Map pp754–5; ☎ 225 1188; www.edinburgh-tattoo.co.uk; 33 Market St) for tickets. The 10-day **Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival** (☎ 668 2019; www.jazzmusic.co.uk) attracts the world’s top musicians from trad to skat to acid. Film buffs invade for the two-week **Edinburgh International Film Festival** (Filmhouse; Map pp754–5; ☎ 623 8030; www.edfilmfest.org.uk; 88 Lothian Rd), the world’s oldest film festival. Bibliophiles crowd Charlotte Sq for the **Edinburgh Book Festival** (☎ 228 5444; www.edbookfest.co.uk; 137 Dundee St), which also runs for two weeks.

There are also festivals outside of August: **Children’s International Theatre Festival** (☎ 225 8050; www.imaginate.org.uk) Last week of May. Performing arts gala for children.

Edinburgh's Christmas (☎ 529 3914; www.edinburghchristmas.com) December. Yuletide shindig that includes a street parade, fairground and open-air ice rink in Princes Street Gardens.

Hogmanay (www.edinburghshogmanay.org) 31 December. Scottish traditional New Year's celebration that includes a massive street party on Princes St.

SLEEPING

There's plenty of accommodation in Edinburgh, but during festival times the city still fills up, so pre-booking is a must. Prices listed here do not reflect Edinburgh Festival rates, when prices increase dramatically. Beware of dodgy hostels that change names frequently to avoid their reputations (and possibly the police) from catching up with them.

Old Town & South of the Royal Mile

BUDGET

Budget Backpackers (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 6531; www.budgetbackpackers.com; 39 Cowgate, The Grassmarket; dm £10.50-15, tw £36) This fun spot piles on the extras, with bike storage, pool tables, laundry, breakfast (£2 extra) and new chrome kitchens. You'll pay a little more for four-bunk dorms, but larger dorms are roomy enough and there's long-term accommodation across the road. Only downside is that the prices increase (£1.50) on weekends, but otherwise a brilliant spot to doss.

Edinburgh Central SYHA (☎ 0870 155 3255; 9 Hardington Pl; dm £15) This brand-spanking new hostel (it had only just opened when we visited) is the SYHA's appeal to a new generation of flash-packers, with a bistro as well as self-catering kitchen. Everything's gleaming and new, with comfy beds and en suite dorms. There's more than 300 beds, so you may get lost in this multi-storey complex, but it's a good bet for vacancies, with a handy location off Leith Walk.

Stretched over two buildings (Brodiess and Brodiess 2), **Brodiess** (Map pp754-5; www.brodiesshostels.co.uk; dm £12, d from £45; ☎) has two convenient addresses on the Royal Mile. The original **Brodiess** (☎ 556 2223; 93 High St) is smaller (50 beds), with four dorms (one a dedicated women's dorm) and a cosy lounge with a fireplace. **Brodiess 2** (☎ 556 6770; 12 High St), higher up the hill, has good family and double rooms as well. Both shy away from bigger groups, so they're good places to meet other travellers.

Other recommendations:

Castle Rock Hostel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 9666; www.scotlands-top-hostels.com; 15 Johnston Tce; dm £12-14, d £40-45; ☎) Scenically positioned near the castle, this is

a popular spot and part of the MacBackers group. Receives good feedback from travellers.

High Street Hostel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 3984; www.scotlands-top-hostels.com; 8 Blackfriars St; dm £12-13.50; ☎ wi-fi) Another excellent option just off the Royal Mile, with a party reputation and plenty of facilities.

MIDRANGE

Newington Rd and Bruntsfield are both good hunting grounds for B&Bs.

Amaryllis Guesthouse (Map pp750-1; ☎ 229 3293; 21 Upper Gilmore Pl; s/d/tr £30/50/75) This elegantly restored Georgian town house has huge rooms, with own bath in many rooms. It also offers triples, which are hard to find in Edinburgh, and is ideal for families who want to explore the Old Town but would like to stay in a quieter pocket.

Afton Guest House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 229 1019; www.aftonguesthouse.co.uk; 1 Hartington Gardens; s/d £36/60) The 'tartantastica' downstairs belies the tastefully decorated rooms upstairs, which have nice touches such as your own bathrobe and mini-lounges. Though not as cheap as it once was, it remains a clean spot with spacious rooms.

Cuaran House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 221 0047; www.cuaran-house-edinburgh.co.uk; 47 Leamington Tce; s/d & tw from £40/80) Bright and arty, this restored town house is a stylish guesthouse known for its welcoming owners. Period features and wooden floorboards are kept, but the bold decoration makes this place an explosion of colour. Breakfasts are also good, particularly the veggie option.

Greenhouse (Map pp750-1; ☎ 622 7634; www.greenhouse-edinburgh.com; 14 Hartington Gardens; s/d £65/70) In a neighbourhood nook, this guesthouse has an emphasis on the ecological that includes no animal products in the bathroom. The breakfast room is similarly protected as a vegan/vegetarian oasis in flesh-focused Scotland. Plus it can offer advice on walks around the area, and meat-free dining options.

Dukes of Windsor Street (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 6046; www.dukesofwindsor.com; 17 Windsor St; d £76-100) Shrugging off the guesthouse tat of others in this area, this stylish spot offers premier rooms with sexy dark-wood furniture amid minimalist whites. Breakfasts run to croissants, salmon, a selection of teas and fresh fruits. Don't mistake the price tag for a guesthouse, because this is really a boutique hotel.

Other recommendations:

Kingsview Guest House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 229 8004; www.kingsviewguesthouse.com; 28 Gilmore Pl; r per person

from £20) A good option that feels a bit like a Highland seaside retreat, with family rooms and paperback library.

Hopetoun (Map pp750-1; ☎ 667 7691; www.hopetoun.com; 15 Mayfield Rd; s/d £25/50) Has two large, homely rooms decorated with bold modern paintings; owner happily offers tourist tips.

Southside Guest House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 668 4422; www.southsideguesthouse.co.uk; 8 Newington Rd; s/d from £50/64) A sophisticated option that mostly caters for couples, with embellishments such as DVD players and good coffee at breakfast.

TOP END

Scotsman Hotel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 5565; www.thescotsmanhotel.com; North Bridge; s/d £240/500, ste £450; ☎) Once 'the most magnificent newspaper building in the world', this building has had every trace of ink refurbished from it to become Edinburgh's grandest hotel. It's decked out in its own tweed with more than 50 wood-panelled rooms enjoying either New Town views or more spectacular views over North Bridge; all come with DVDs and computers. The penthouse is supreme decadence, with its own sauna, library and rooftop barbecue.

Witchery by the Castle (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 5613; www.thewitchery.com; 352 Castlehill; ste from £295) Flamboyantly Gothic, this hotel plays up its location close to the castle by reworking a 16th-century Old Town house into seven suites of pure decadence. Each suite is individually designed but all are kitted out with four-poster beds, antique furniture and even the odd suit of armour. With the fabulous Witchery restaurant added into the deal, it's hard to resist this beguiling hotel.

New Town & Northern Edinburgh

BUDGET

Edinburgh Caravan Club Site (☎ 312 6874; www.cara vandub.co.uk; 35 Marine Dr; tent sites £3.50-5, plus per person £3.80-5) Five miles from the city, this caravan park is nicely positioned overlooking the Firth of Forth, and has excellent facilities. It's geared primarily to caravans, but there are still plenty of tent sites. It's essential to book during summer, when no cars are allowed in the tent area. Take bus 8A from Broughton St.

Belford Hostel (Map pp750-1; ☎ 225 6209; www.hoppo.com; 6-8 Douglas Gardens; dm £12.50-18, tw & d £42.50; ☎) This converted church keeps many of its original fittings (including gorgeous stained-glass windows) and adds a cheery bar and decent kitchen to make for a religious

experience. Rooms have between four and 10 beds each, with prices inverse to the bunkage, plus a good rate for weekly stays (£50). Check out the colourful cartoons in the common room, which are anything but holy.

MIDRANGE

Eyre Pl and Pilrig St both have several guest-house options.

Dene Guest House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 2700; www.deneguesthouse.com; 7 Eyre Pl; s £25-36, d £30-40) A favourite with solo travellers for its affordable single rooms, this Georgian house is accommodating if a little cramped. Idiosyncratic rooms can come with en suites at the upper end of the price range and have wooden fittings right down to the loos. The friendly French hostess is an asset to this charming property.

Caravel Guest House (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 4444; www.caravelhouse.co.uk; 30 London St; r per person £30) Handy for Broughton St's pubs and restaurants, this option is chintzily decorated but rooms have springy mattresses and brilliant bathtubs. Hospitality here is cracking, with plenty of advice on Broughton St's best beers and hearty breakfasts to soak up the hangover in the morning.

Frederick House Hotel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 1999; www.townhousehotels.co.uk; 42 Frederick St; d £60-90) This well-positioned hotel is decked out in lovely interior wallpaper with roomy double beds and large baths to soak away the day's walking aches. It's also one of few options in this range that has a lift, which is ideal if you've got lots of baggage.

Christopher North House Hotel (Map pp750-1; ☎ 225 2720; www.christophernorth.co.uk; 6 Gloucester Pl; d £98) This classy boutique hotel is one of Stockbridge's best options. Once the home of a writer and philosopher, it's been re-fitted so rooms feature writing desks, baths and some impressive views (though these may cost you a little more). The Mozart Kaffee Haus makes a good spot for a warming hot chocolate (or perhaps something a little stronger) on your way out and breakfasts are made all the more brilliant by the room's chandeliers.

Other recommendations:

Original Raj (Map pp750-1; ☎ 346 1333; www.rajempire.com; 6 West Coates; s/d £40/50; ☎) An Indian-inspired guesthouse right down to the samosas for breakfast and the elephant in the front yard.

Balmoral Guest House (☎ 554 1857; www.balmoralguesthouse.co.uk; 32 Pilrig St; d £45) A homey spot with the owner's passion for old radios displayed throughout;

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND: LEITH

Once a rough part of Edinburgh that was best used as inspiration for *Trainspotting* and not much else, Leith is becoming a byword for urban renewal. There's plenty of exploring to be done wandering along its waters and popping for the occasional pint at a pub.

If you're after a dining experience, **Fishers** (☎ 554 5666; 1 The Shore, Leith; mains £13-16; ☺ noon-10.30pm) makes a cosy bistro in a 17th-century signal tower on the Leith shore. Seafood is definitely recommended anywhere in Leith, but here it's a real treat. The **Vintner's Room** (☎ 554 6767; www.thevintnersrooms.com; The Vaults, 87 Giles St, Leith; mains £18-23; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) is another place for excellent meals here.

No hotel represents the reinvention of Leith like the arrival of the chic boutique chain **Malmaison** (☎ 468 5000; www.malmaison.com; 1 Tower Pl, Leith; r from £129; p), which is located in a former seamen's mission. There's no trace of fish scales today as this ultra-hip hotel overlooks the waters of Leith in the nicest part of the port. Rooms are perfect for a romantic weekend, with beds built for sin or sopor, CD players, great bathrooms and plenty of contemporary flair.

communal breakfast table is ideal for meeting other travellers.

Terrace Hotel (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 3423; www.terracehotel.co.uk; 37 Royal Tce; s/d from £31/60) Suits independent travellers, with a large front room and older shared bathrooms.

TOP END

Glasshouse (Map pp754-5; ☎ 525 8200; www.theetoncollection.com; 2 Greenside Pl; r from £200; (P)) It may seem odd to locate this slick hotel in a former church near the Omni centre, but the modern design inside whisks you off to another world. Floor-to-ceiling windows in rooms afford spectacular views, especially if you're enjoying room service on the leather couches or, ideally between the Egyptian cotton sheets. The rooftop garden is another highlight.

Balmoral Hotel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 2414; www.thebalmoralhotel.com; 1 Princes St; s/d from £210/240; (P) (L)) This auspicious icon near Waverley station has long been regarded as Edinburgh's best bed. Views over Princes St and the Scott Monument from luxurious rooms that include marble bathrooms and 18th-century design offer a unique experience. Big-name festival guests usually stay here.

EATING

There are good-value restaurants scattered all around the city. For cheap eats, the best areas are where the student population is high – especially near the university around Nicolson St – but you can also take advantage of the fact that most Edinburgh restaurants offer a very cheap set menu at lunchtime. Two of the best zones for evening dining are Stockbridge and around The Shore in Leith.

Old Town & South of the Royal Mile**BUDGET**

Curpik Elephants & Bagels (Map pp750-1; ☎ 668 4404; www.elephanthouse.co.uk; 37 Marshall St; bagels £2-4; ☺ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-6pm Sat & Sun) All the tourists may be at Elephant House for the Potter shots, but some of the best bites can be found here. Popular with students (we're talking massive lunch lines), it does snappy bagels such as raisins and pinenuts or chicken tikka, plus there are breakfast bagels with the likes of scrambled eggs and salmon. You can save yourself the 15p eat-in fee in favour of sharing the sunny square with the students.

Elephant House (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 5355; 21 George IV Bridge; snacks £3-5; ☺ 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-11pm Sat & Sun; (L)) Brilliant café that does baguettes, pastries and coffees powerful enough to inspire JK Rowling to pen Harry Potter (see the boxed text, p753).

Engine Shed (Map pp750-1; ☎ 662 0040; www.engineshed.org.uk; 19 St Leonard's Lane; lunches £3-6) This is an ideal spot for a cuppa and a bakery-fresh scone after climbing down Arthur's Seat. It's been set up to help special-needs adults and as well as having their own bakery they also make their own tofu, which is used plentifully through curries. Once the terminus of the rail network, this place is a favoured haunt of local writer Ian Rankin.

Forest (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 4538; www.theforest.org.uk; 2 Bristo Pl; light meals £3-5; (L) wi-fi) This grungy spot is for bohemians, digital hippies and artists as it hosts gigs from poetry to punk with an art space called Totalkunst (mind your language... oh, the German word for art). But its vegetarian food is worth sitting through the odd bad poetry event in the evenings,

with brimming salads, soups and flavoursome curries. The dreadlocked zippies bring in their laptops and make a soy chai last as long as it takes to use the wi-fi.

MIDRANGE

Outsider (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 3131; 15 George IV Bridge; dishes £6-10; ☺ noon-11pm; (L)) This Edinburgh stalwart is known for its rainforest interior (ferns in an atmospheric darkness) and has a brilliant menu that jumps straight in with mains such as rabbit cassoulet. The Sunday brunch features DJs and hangover-busting breakfasts.

David Bann Vegetarian Restaurant & Bar (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 5888; www.davidbann.com; 56-58 St Mary's St; mains £9-11; ☺ 11am-10pm Sun-Thu, 11am-10.30pm Fri & Sat) On a one-man mission to convince the world that vegetarian food doesn't have to mean alfalfa and mashed yeast, Bann has been thrilling locals with his sophisticated vegetarian cuisine for years. The Thai fritters are packed with flavours such as ginger, lime, green chilli and sesame, while the risotto verdi blends asparagus and rocket with a twirl of mascarpone. The creative menu has enough zest to convert a carnivore.

Apartment (Map pp750-1; ☎ 228 6456; 7-13 Barday Pl; mains £9-14; ☺ dinner daily, lunch Sat & Sun) Whether it's in the décor or the menu, simple yet modish is the order of the day at this eatery. Dishes are divided into 'things': succulent fish things such as the baked sea bass papillote with king prawns and pepped up with chilli and lime are

our favourite, but the introduction of inventive kebab-like lines such as roasted vegetable and goats cheese are both healthy and popular.

Fenwick's Restaurant (Map pp750-1; ☎ 667 4265; www.fenwicks-restaurant.co.uk; 15 Salisbury Pl; mains £20; ☺ lunch & dinner) Frequented by Edinburgh's fictional detective Inspector Rebus, this discreet spot does solid interpretations of traditional Scottish food, including a very good haddock-and-pea risotto and a mouthwatering roasted sea bream. The nonfictional crowd are mature professorial types from the nearby university, so dust off your tweeds and spectacles to fit in.

Other recommendations:

Phenecia (Map pp754-5; ☎ 662 4493; 55 West Nicolson St; set lunches £4.95, mains £6-12; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Truly global menu with good vegetarian options. Celebrates its 20th year in 2007.

Maison Bleue (Map pp754-5; ☎ 226 1900; www.maison-bleue.co.uk; 36-38 Victoria St; meals £8-13; ☺ lunch & dinner) Where France meets North Africa, you'll find the menu for this likable eatery.

TOP END

Witchery by the Castle (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 5613; 352 Castlehill; set lunches £9.95, mains £20-30; ☺ lunch & dinner) Inspiring dining in a romantic environment just down from the castle, with an affordable lunch option.

Tower (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 3003; www.tower-restaurant.com; mains £16-30; ☺ lunch & dinner) With a rooftop spot in the Museum of Scotland, this

FANCY A BIT OF SCOTTISH?

Scotland's cuisine has long been dismissed as one born out of deprivation (why else would you eat sheep's stomach or dry oatcakes?), but modern Scottish cuisine isn't afraid to get playful with its traditions and use the best seafood and game to come up with some fantastic dishes. It's not about haggis, it's not the cullen skink – it's a red-meated main served with a side of innovation.

Some of our favourite proponents of Scottish cuisine:

Howie's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 5766; 29 Waterloo Pl; 2-course lunches/dinners £8.75/15.95; ☺ lunch & dinner)

Monster Mash (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 5782; 47 Thistle St; mains £5-7; ☺ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun)

Stac Polly (www.stacpolly.co.uk; mains £14-20; ☺ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner daily) Grindlay St (Map pp754-5; ☎ 229 5405; 8-10 Grindlay St) Dublin St (☎ 556 2231; 29-33 Dublin St)

Tower (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 3003; www.tower-restaurant.com; mains £16-30 ☺ lunch & dinner)

Still hungry? There's some great meals to be had elsewhere, so pack your knife and fork for these foodie road trips:

- Gary Moore's Restaurant at the Station (p804)
- Linen Room (p809)
- Quail 2 (p896)
- Ubiquitous Chip (p794)

is a top-of-the-town dining room. The slender, slinky dining room and sometimes-too-nippy outdoor area afford excellent Old Town views, while serving up new Scottish cuisine including roasted venison with Stornoway black pudding or lobster with asparagus and curry oil. And if you don't believe it's fabulous: Joanna Lumley has been known to dine here when in town.

New Town & Northern Edinburgh

BUDGET

L'Alba D'Oro (Map pp750-1; ☎ 557 2580; www.lalbadoro.com; 5-7 Henderson Row; fish supper £4-6; ☎ 5pm-11pm) Pronouncing any place as Edinburgh's best chippie is always contentious, but with a busy knot of cars shuffling for parks outside, this place gets the nod from many locals. But it's more than a chippie; you wouldn't expect a 300+ wine list at your average deep-fryer, nor could you get zesty prawn suppers or veggie haggis.

Monster Mash (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 5782; 47 Thistle St; mains £5-7; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) This is *the* place to get great British nostalgia grub. The menu is deceptively simple: soup or sausages and mash. But these snags are sublime, with vegetarian options and daily specials such as pepper, apple and leek. This place is so successful it's started competing with itself, opening a Monster Mex outlet opposite that does pricier Tex-Mex meals. Either way it's a gravy-yard smash.

Urban Angel (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 6215; www.urban-angel.co.uk; 121 Hanover St; meals £7-12, snacks £4-6; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Sat, 5-11pm Sun; 🍷) This heaven-sent spot has a quick-fix snack bar (think gourmet wraps, juices and java) out front and a more relaxed dining area with a chilled white interior. The eat-in menu is divine, with a risotto that's pepped up with Glen Almond pork with Arran smoked cheeses.

Other recommendations:

Henderson's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 2131; www.hendersonsofedinburgh.co.uk; 94 Hanover St; snacks £2-4; ☎ 8am-10.45pm Mon-Sat) Healthy picnic food is sold in the shop, with great Salad Table restaurant out the back specialising in good-for-you grub.

Blue Moon Café (Map pp750-1; ☎ 557 0911; 36 Broughton St; light meals £4-8; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Thu, 10am-10pm Fri-Sun) A local favourite that does sensational burgers and weekend all-day breakfasts.

MIDRANGE

Thai Me Up In Edinburgh (Map pp750-1; ☎ 558 9234; www.timeup.com; 4 Picardy St; set lunch £6, meals £8-10; ☎ lunch & dinner) Despite the puntastic title this

is actually a stylish spot with plenty of veggie options. There's tempura drenched in rich plum sauce or spring rolls presented as bon bons packed with mint and noodles that you're bound to enjoy. A portrait of the King of Thailand presides over the room and from his cheeky grin, he seems to approve.

Howie's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 5766; 29 Waterloo Pl; 2-course lunches/dinners £8.75/15.95; ☎ lunch & dinner) The best of four branches of this popular institution is in a former chapel that is best appreciated at a table on the raised altar. The ever-evolving menu reinterprets the best of Scottish produce, and is excellent value for the quality.

Dionika (☎ 652 3993; www.dionika.com; 3-6 Canonmills Bridge; mains £14-17; ☎ lunch & dinner daily) This hip Spanish deli-style place complete with hanging meats and garlic excels at tapas and seafood (due to the owners' year of trading in fish). Want to sample the best? You should go for the grand parillada, a for-two serve of everything that's great about Scottish seafood. The only downside is the rather hard wrought-iron chairs – they may be authentic but they're uncomfortable after a while.

Stac Polly (☎ 556 2231; www.stacpolly.co.uk; 29-33 Dublin St; mains £14-20; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner daily) Frowned on by some traditionalists, this tartan tearaway does Scottish with a twist. Expect haggis to be parcelled up in filo and drizzled with plum sauce, and puddings worth saving some room for. The Old Town branch (Map pp754-5; ☎ 229 5405, 8-10 Grindlay St) has slightly more tartan, but the stonework of this branch gives it the better ambience.

Other recommendations:

Loon Fung (☎ 556 1781; 2 Warriston Pl; mains £7-12; ☎ noon-11.30pm Mon-Fri, 2-11.30pm Sat & Sun; 🍷) Edinburgh's old water chestnut that does genuine Cantonese.

Phuket Pavilion (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 4323; www.phuketpavilion.co.uk; 121 Hanover St; mains £12-14; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat, dinner daily) A heaven-sent Thai with a quick-fix takeaway out front and relaxed dining area inside.

TOP END

Vintners Rooms (☎ 554 6767; www.thevintnersrooms.com; The Vaults, 87 Giles St, Leith; mains £18-23; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) This discreet dark restaurant has long been known as one of Edinburgh's best. The auspicious stone building was originally commissioned by the Vintners Guild in 1739 but now serves up stuffed quail and osso bucco. The set lunch (two courses for £15.50) allows you to experience top-notch cuisine without frightening your bank manager.

DRINKING

From wood-panelled locals to grungy student speakeasies, there's a place for every kind of drinker in Edinburgh. Happy hunting grounds for pubs and bars include Broughton St, the university area, Stockbridge and Leith. Coffee places abound in the city, including converted police boxes, cheesily called Cop-pachino and other punny names, handing out quick caffeine fixes.

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Borough (Map pp750-1; ☎ 668 2255; www.boroughhotel.com; 72-80 The Causeway) Slinky leather couches and intimate lighting make everyone look attractive at this hotel bar, which stocks European beers and inventive cocktails. On Saturday night there's a tinkling piano, while Friday features local DJs.

Cloisters (Map pp754-5; ☎ 221 9997; 26 Brougham St; ☎ noon-midnight) Everyone's favourite place to stop in on the way into the city, this endearing spot in a former church manse is right next door to the church and is a sanctuary for drinkers. Worshipers of real ale give praise to the old-style pews in this intimate spot.

Pear Tree House (Map pp754-5; ☎ 667 7533; 38 West Nicolson St) It's hard not to love this boisterous pub, which has its roots firmly in Edinburgh's student zone, with a beer garden that's ideal for summer. The absorbing board games and too-comfy seats have many late essays and unprepared-for exams on their conscience.

Beanscene (Map pp754-5; ☎ 667 5697; www.bean-scene.com; 99 Nicolson St; ☎ 7.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, 9am-11pm Sun) Late-night caffieners know this is the spot for their java jolt as they join the procrastinating student crowd. Sure it's a chain, but it's definitely the strongest link, with loungey couches and powerful coffee. Whether it's for the odd local bands or a java rendezvous, this bright spot is all about being seen.

Other recommendations:

Bennet's Bar (Map pp750-1; ☎ 229 5143; 8 Leven St) Small, historic pub with Victorian fittings and mature crowd.

Central (Map pp754-5; ☎ 667 7355; 32 West Nicholson St; ☎ 11am-1pm Mon-Sat, 11am-midnight Sun) A downstairs studenty lounge with smooth music and comfy lounges.

Human Be-in (Map pp754-5; ☎ 662 8860; www.human-be-in.co.uk; 2-8 West Crosscauseway) Popular with a well-to-do university crowd, this place has an excellent wine list.

Traverse Bar Café (Map pp754-5; ☎ 228 5383; 10 Cambridge St) Under Traverse Theatre, this pre-play tippler has art exhibitions on the walls.

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Café Royal Circle Bar (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 1884; 19 West Register St) Famous as a location for *Chariots of Fire*, this elaborately decorated bar is one of the best in town. Tile panels feature famous Scots and the bar has traditional polished brass, but the ceiling is a masterpiece. Amid all this grandeur the crowd is a genuine group enjoying a post-work bevvy.

Kay's Bar (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 1858; 39 Jamaica St West) Tired of them pubs where the TV's

IRN WHO?

You may notice in the wee hours of the morning that many Scots will look to an orange fizzy drink to take care of the excesses of the night before. The miracle juice is Irn Bru, long promoted as Scotland's other national drink, and it has traditionally outsold Coca-Cola in Scotland, though recent sales figures put the two beverages neck and neck.

The soft drink maker Barr began making Irn Bru in 1901, calling it 'Iron-Brew' (labelling regulations forced the change in spelling to 'Irn-Bru' in 1946). The claim that it was made with 'real iron girders' is probably based on the ingredient ammonium ferric citrate, which along with caffeine, sugar and water makes up the flavour. The true recipe of Irn Bru is only ever known to two members of Barrs' board, who guard it with their lives.

Irn Bru is known for its cheeky advertising campaigns. Recently the new energy drink, Irn Bru 32, featured a loud Glaswegian cuckoo busting through the walls of a library to wake a dozy student by yelling 'Wakey wakey!' then telling off a librarian. Complaints that the humorous ad encouraged violence and a negative image of Glasgow were answered by re-dubbing, so the hard bird now replies with an English accent to a shushing librarian 'I say, awfully sorry, didn't mean to cause offence'.

Beyond the hype, there's the taste: vaguely citrusy and teeming with sugar. Does it cure the almighty hangover? Well the caffeine will certainly help, but the best thing for a hangover is drinking heavily the night before.

blaring in the background? This former wine merchant (walls are decorated with old wine barrels) is the cosy little pub for you. The rustic ambience is designed not to get in the way of sampling real ales and malt whiskies.

Street (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 4272; www.thestreetbar.com; 2 Picardy Pl) Part-owned by local DJ Trendy Wendy, this place attracts pre-clubbers with a sexy chrome-and-leather interior. A trippy fish-sphere keeps an eye on the cocktail-mixing and snogging booths as the crowd warms up for nights at Ego (see opposite). A funky local with a good range of bottled beers.

Star Bar (Map pp750-1; ☎ 539 8070; www.starbar.co.uk; 1 Northumberland Pl) Hard to find but worth the pilgrimage for one of the New Town's best jukeboxes and pleasant beer garden out the back. Oddly, Thursday night attracts a backgammon championship and there's an ingeniously decorated football table. Don't ask about the skull, which many believe has claimed the lives of those who touch it.

Barony Bar (Map pp750-1; ☎ 557 0546; 81 Broughton St) Pulling off the trick of being traditional and simultaneously hip, this boozier works miracles with real ales and on-tap lagers. Worn tables, a jovial crowd and warming fires mean that this spot remains a firm favourite, especially for reading the Sunday papers.

Outhouse (Map pp750-1; ☎ 557 6668; 12a Brougham St Lane) This more mature spot has a relaxed crowd that enjoys the occasional guitarist playing and DJs on weekends. The beer garden out the back is known for canoodling, especially during winter when heaters keep it sultry.

WORTH THE TRIP

With so many pubs in 'Auld Reekie', why would you head out to the uninspiringly named Duddingston? The answer is the **Sheep Heid Inn** (☎ 656 6951; 43 The Causeway, Duddingston; meals £8-14; ☎ lunch & dinner), possibly Edinburgh's oldest boozier, with a licence dating back to 1360. Mary Queen of Scots had a tippie here and Bonnie Prince Charlie sampled the ales in the main bar that's gorgeously lit by leaded glass. As well as some tasty ales there's also some good grub on offer, from barbecued venison burgers to lamb shanks. The beer garden affords views of Arthur's Seat and if you're walking up the hill this is the perfect spot to reward yourself with a pint.

Cumberland Bar (Map pp750-1; ☎ 558 3134; 1 Cumberland St) One of the New Town's cosiest, this bar pours real ales and is known for its burgers. The dreamy beer garden is a treat in summer, but the homey wooden interior when it's filled with raconteur locals is tough to beat.

Other recommendations:

Antiquary (Map pp750-1; ☎ 225 2858; 72 St Stephen St) Another character-laden Stockbridge boozier, this basement bar has chrome salespeople shaking their heads in dismay.

Port o'Leith (☎ 554 3568; 58 Constitution St, Leith) Leith gem that harks back to the area's nautical community.

Tiles (Map pp754-5; ☎ 558 1507; 1 St Andrew Sq) An atmospheric spot with grand fit-out that's a good option when Café Royal Circle Bar is packed.

Waterfront (☎ 554 7427; 1c Dock Pl, Leith) Dark and atmospheric Leith wine bar with conservatory and terrace; check out the scent dispenser in the gent's loos!

ENTERTAINMENT

For full coverage buy the *List* (£2.20), a fortnightly magazine with listings for theatre, cinema, clubs and also kids' events.

Cinemas

Cameo (Map pp750-1; ☎ 228 4141; 38 Home St; tickets £5.90) Art-house and mainstream films.

Filmhouse (Map pp754-5; ☎ 228 2688; 88 Lothian Rd; tickets £5.80) Shows art-house, classic and foreign films, and hosts the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

Edinburgh's dynamic gay scene is concentrated on the 'pink triangle' around Green-side Pl and upper Broughton St. Venues here are both gay- and lesbian-friendly. The Blue Moon Café (see p766) is a quieter meeting spot, where you can browse the informative *Scottsgay* magazine (www.scotsgay.co.uk).

CC Blooms (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 9331; 23 Greenside Pl; ☎ 10.30pm-3am) Still the queen of Edinburgh's scene, CC's serves up music from disco cheese to meaty beats. Free admission means it can get very crowded.

Planet Out (Map pp750-1; ☎ 524 0061; 6 Baxter's Pl, Leith Walk; ☎ 4pm-1am Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat & Sun) During the week it's a chilled spot, but on weekends there's a party crowd at this younger joint.

Live Music

While pubs offer the odd strumming guitarist or lazy DJ to break up their trivia nights, Edinburgh has several venues dedicated to music.

Bannerman's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 556 3254; 212 Cowgate) Below the Royal Mile, this atmospheric

boozier has live music nearly every night, usually unsigned local rockers.

Royal Oak (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 2976; www.royal-oak-folk.com; 1 Infirmary St) The folk-music flagship of Edinburgh, this is a gathering place for folk musicians with irregular sessions. You're guaranteed a gig on Sundays from 8.30pm when the Wee Folk Club plays (admission £3).

Queen's Hall (Map pp750-1; ☎ 668 2019; www.thequeenshall.net; Clerk St; tickets £10-24; ☎ box office 10am-5.30pm) Home to the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, this venue also hosts jazz concerts, tribute bands and a whole range of other events.

Other recommendations:

Henry's Jazz Cellar (Map pp754-5; ☎ 538 7385; 8 Morrison St; ☎ Tue-Sun until 3am) There's jazz six nights a week at this basement joint that attracts trad-jazz fans.

Liquid Room (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 2564; www.liquidroom.com; 9c Victoria St; ☎ Tue-Sun) Attracts a good mix of acts from the Misfits to Hayseed Dixie and also hosts T Break heats (see the boxed text, p796) and T on the Fringe, plus some good club nights.

Whistlebinkies (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 5114; 4 South Bridge) This late-night drinking den has live music nightly and Monday night open-mic jams.

Nightclubs

Edinburgh club nights range from ice-cold cool to kitschy fun. Cover charges range from £5 to £15 and most venues stay open until 3am.

Ego (Map pp750-1; ☎ 478 7434; 14 Picardy Pl; ☎ nightly) Ever the glamour puss, Ego is all about shaking it to music from happy hardcore to disco anthems. The ever-popular Vegas is a 'sleazy listening' soiree held monthly on a Saturday.

Cabaret Voltaire (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 6176; www.thecabaretvoltaire.com; 36 Blair St; admission from £2; ☎ from 9pm) Hosting local and visiting DJs with a great range of club nights (from Latin to drum 'n' bass), this two-room club works hard to keep Edinburgh hot and sweaty.

Stereo (Map pp754-5; ☎ 229 9438; www.clubstereo.co.uk; 28 King's Stables Rd) Concentrating on cheap drinks as much as the music, this place attracts a young, alco-popping crowd. The tunes are chart, pop, house and disco cheese.

Venue (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 3073; www.edinvenue.com; 17-23 Calton Rd) Where there's sticky floors and scuffed furniture you know you're in the safe hands of a reliable club. This vast, bare-brick spot hosts an older crowd who like their laid-back Latin funk, electro and disco.

Other recommendations:

Bongo Club (Map pp750-1; ☎ 558 7604; www.thebongoclub.co.uk; 37 Holyrood Rd; ☎ nightly) This

place claims to 'put the cult back into culture', bashing out beats from dub, funk and hip-hop.

Honeycomb (Map pp754-5; ☎ 530 5540; 15 Niddry St) In the old vaults under South Bridge, this spot does top drum'n'bass as well as funk.

Sport

Edinburgh's football clubs are strongly supported. **Hibernian** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 661 2159; www.hibs.co.uk; Easter Rd Stadium, Albion Pl), the pride of Leith and known as Hibs or the Hibebees, traditionally draws its support from the city's Catholic community, while **Hearts** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 200 7201; www.heartsfc.co.uk; Tynecastle Stadium, Gorgie Rd), nicknamed the Jambos, represents the other side.

Edinburgh heaves during the season of rugby internationals. The Six Nations tournament runs from January to March, and Edinburgh's home games are played at **Murrayfield Stadium** (☎ 346 5000; www.sru.org.uk; 112 Roseburn St), west of Haymarket. It can be difficult to get accommodation over these weekends.

Theatre

Edinburgh has more than its fair share of theatres, mostly because of the frantic festival activity.

Edinburgh Festival Theatre (Map pp754-5; ☎ 529 6000; www.eft.co.uk; 13-29 Nicolson St) From ballet to folk music from around the world.

Royal Lyceum Theatre (Map pp754-5; ☎ 248 4848; www.lyceum.org.uk; 30 Grindlay St) High-quality drama, concerts and ballet.

Stand (Map pp754-5; ☎ 558 7272; www.thestand.co.uk; 5 York Pl; ☎ nightly) Atmospheric comedy venue with shows every night.

Traverse Theatre (Map pp754-5; ☎ 228 1404; www.traverse.co.uk; 10 Cambridge St) Top-class venue staging an exciting programme of drama and dance.

SHOPPING

Most of the high-street brands are represented on Princes St and the massive **Ocean Terminal** (☎ 555 8888; www.oceanterminal.com; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) has several more chains. For boutiques or more-quirky shopping, hit Cockburn and Victoria Sts in the Old Town, or Stockbridge, particularly St Stephen St.

Clothing

21st Century Kilts (Map pp754-5; ☎ 557 0256; www.21stcenturykilt.com; 555 Castlehill) This funky outlet updates the kilt for the new millennium, with previous shoppers including Robbie Williams and KT Tunstall.

Armstrong's (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 5557; 83 The Grassmarket) You'll find an excellent selection of secondhand retro/vintage clothing here. There is another branch at 64 Clerk St.

Leith Army Stores (Map pp750-1; ☎ 556 2337; 7 Brunswick Pl, Leith Walk) This well-stocked place packs in a good range of outdoor gear from survival saws to backpacks.

Joey D (Map pp750-1; ☎ 5576672 www.joey-d.co.uk; 54 Broughton St) This hip Edinburgh designer does mash-ups of clothing, grafting a panel from a tweed jacket to an army uniform – all very punk.

Department Stores

Harvey Nichols (Map pp754-5; ☎ 524 8388; 30 St Andrew Sq) Harvey Nicks is the place for a wide range of designers.

Jenners (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 2442; 48 Princes St) An Edinburgh institution, opened in 1838. Stocked with gifts, a wide range of clothing and much more in a gorgeous old building. The perfect place to buy travel-ready haggis.

Other Shops

Royal Mile Whiskies (Map pp754-5; ☎ 225 3383; 379 High St) Although packed with tourists, this shop has a great selection (though prices may be cheaper at an off-licence).

Fopp (Map pp754-5; ☎ 220 0133; 55 Cockburn St) This cheap record and book shop is an Edinburgh success story, now expanding into Glasgow.

Avalanche Records (www.avalancherecords.co.uk) West Nicholson St (Map pp754-5; ☎ 668 2374; 17 West Nicholson St); Cockburn St (☎ 225 3939; 63 Cockburn St); Dundas St (☎ 332 209934; Dundas St) This indie record store specialises in used, vinyl and hard-to-find. There are three branches across the city, but Cockburn St is the best.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Edinburgh airport (☎ 333 1000; www.edinburghairport.com), 7 miles west of Edinburgh, has services to other cities in the UK, Ireland and Continental Europe. The main airlines servicing the city are **British Airways** (☎ 0845 773 3377; www.ba.com), **British Midland** (☎ 0870 600 6868; www.flybmi.com) and **easyJet** (☎ 0870 600 0000; www.easyjet.com). These airlines have domestic services from London, Bristol and Manchester, among others, and British Midland, British Airways and their subsidiaries offer flights to many other Scottish destinations such as Shetland, Inverness, Stornoway and Orkney.

Bus

Edinburgh's St Andrew Sq bus station (Map pp754-5) is on the northeastern side of the square. There are frequent daily links to/from many cities in England and Wales, with fares from London particularly competitive.

National Express (☎ 08705 808080; www.nationalexpress.com) runs to London (from £33 return, 9½ hours, up to four daily). There are also services to Newcastle (£14, 2¾ hours, three to five daily) and York (£28.50, 5¾ hours, one daily).

Scottish Citylink (☎ 08705 505050; www.citylink.co.uk) buses connect Edinburgh with all of Scotland's major cities and towns, including Aberdeen (£16, 3¼ hours, hourly); Dundee (£9, 1¾ hours, 30 minutes); Fort William (£20, four hours, three daily); Glasgow (£4, 1¼ hours, 20 minutes); Inverness (£7, four hours, hourly); Portree (£27, eight hours, two daily) and Stirling (£4.20, one hour, hourly).

Stagecoach (☎ 01698 870 768; www.stagecoachbus.com) runs the Motorvator bus to Glasgow (£4, 1¼ hours, half-hourly Monday to Saturday, hourly Sunday).

Another budget operator is **Megabus** (☎ 0900 160 0900; www.megabus.com), which has cheap bus fares (from as little as £1.50) from Edinburgh to Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Inverness and Perth.

See p969 for details of buses to Edinburgh from London and the rest of the UK.

Car & Motorcycle

The main approaches to Edinburgh become gridlocked very quickly at rush hour, so time your arrival and departure to avoid these periods.

Train

The main train station is Waverley (Map pp754-5), in the heart of the city, although most trains also stop at Haymarket station, which is convenient for the West End. You can buy tickets, make reservations and get travel information at the **Edinburgh Rail Travel Centre** (☎ 4.45am-12.30am Mon-Sat, 7am-12.30am Sun) in Waverley station.

First ScotRail (☎ 0845 601 5929; www.firstscotrail.com) has two northern lines from Edinburgh: one cuts north across the Grampians to Inverness (£32.90, 3½ hours, six to nine daily) and on to Thurso; the other follows the coast north around to Aberdeen (£32.90, 2½ hours, hourly or more frequently) and on to Inverness. There

are trains every 15 to 30 minutes to Glasgow (£9, 50 minutes). For fare and timetable information, phone the **National Rail Enquiry Service** (☎ 0845 748 4950; www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Virgin Trains (☎ 08457 222 333; www.virgintrains.co.uk) operates routes to Aberdeen (£9.50, 2¼ hours, half-hourly), Glasgow (£8.80, 50 minutes, quarter-hourly) and Dundee (£15.50, 1¼ hours, half-hourly), as well as selected cities in the UK.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Between 5am and midnight, Lothian Buses operates **Flybybus** (Bus 100; ☎ 555 6363; www.flybybus.com; one way/return £3.30/5), which drops off at Waverley St (30 minutes, every 15 minutes).

A taxi to the city centre costs £13.

Bicycle

Although there are plenty of steep hills to negotiate, Edinburgh is ideal for cycling (as nothing is more than half an hour away), the traffic is fairly tolerable and scenic Holyrood Park is close by. There are plenty of cycle lanes on the major streets.

Bike Trax (Map pp750-1; ☎ 228 6333; www.bike-trax.co.uk; 11 Lochrin Pl; bike hire per day/week £12/70; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5.30pm Sat, noon-5pm Sun) does good repairs as well as renting out sturdy mountain bikes.

Car & Motorcycle

Most of the big national operators have offices both in town or at the airport, but there's also **Arnold Clark** (Map pp750-1; ☎ 0845 607 4500; 13 Lochrin Pl; rental per day/week £23/110), a good local outfit.

Driving in Edinburgh is complicated by restricted access on Princes St, George St and Charlotte Sq, with many one-way streets and rare-as-hen's-teeth parking. 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.

Public Transport

The two main companies, **Lothian** (☎ 554 4494; www.lothianbuses.co.uk) and **First Edinburgh** (☎ 08708 727271; www.firstedinburgh.co.uk), provide frequent, cheap services. You buy tickets when you board buses and for Lothian services you need exact change. For most short trips, the fare is 80p. A Day Saver ticket (£2.30, or £2 after 9.30am Monday to Friday, all day at

weekends), available from bus drivers when you board, covers a whole day's travel. After midnight there are special night buses (£2). The free *Edinburgh Travelmap* is useful – it shows bus routes around the city and is available from the tourist office, or contact **Traveline** (☎ 0870 608 2 608; www.travelinescotland.com).

Taxi

There are numerous central taxi ranks; costs are reasonable and £6 gets you almost anywhere around the centre. Local companies include:

Capital Taxis (☎ 228 2555)

Central Radio Taxis (☎ 229 2468; www.taxis-edinburgh.co.uk)

City Cabs (☎ 228 1211; www.citycabs.co.uk)

AROUND EDINBURGH

EDINBURGH ZOO

Located 2.5 miles west of the city, this is one of the world's leading conservation zoos (☎ 0131-34 9171; www.edinburghzoo.org.uk; 134 Corstorphine Rd; adult/child £9/6; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct & Mar, 9am-4.30pm Nov-Feb). Its captive breeding programme has rescued species from extinction, including Siberian tigers, pygmy hippos and red pandas. Kids will love the capering of four different species of penguin in the world's biggest penguin pool, and the Lifelinks 'hands on' zoology centre.

SOUTH QUEENSFERRY & INCHCOLM

Eight miles west of Edinburgh, South Queensferry lolls on the Firth of Forth's southern bank. Named for the frequent crossings made by St Margaret in the 12th century as she commuted between her Edinburgh and Dunfermline palaces, South Queensferry's bridges have made the name an anachronism, with the magnificent **Forth Rail Bridge** one of Victorian engineering's finest monuments. It took seven years to complete and cost the lives of 58 workers to create this over-a-mile-long stretch. The adjacent Forth Rd Bridge is a graceful suspension bridge completed in 1964.

Offshore, tiny Inchcolm Island (only 800m long) houses Scotland's best-preserved assemblage of monastic buildings, including a medieval **abbey** (HS; ☎ 01383-823332; adult/child £3.30/1.30; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Easter-Sep), which was founded for Augustinian priors in 1123. Repeated English attacks during the 14th century necessitated

a redesign in the 15th century, with only the octagonal chapterhouse, with its stone roof, surviving from the 13th century.

Maid of the Forth (☎ 0131-331 4857; www.maidoftheforth.co.uk; adult/child £13/4.50' (♿) Jul-Sep, Sat & Sun Apr-Jun & Oct) leaves (weather permitting) from Hawes Pier and cruises under the bridges to the island.

Frequent trains run from Edinburgh to South Queensferry's Dalmeny station (15 minutes). There are also numerous buses, including First Edinburgh bus 88, westbound from Princes St.

Hopetoun House

Two miles west of South Queensferry, **Hopetoun House** (☎ 0131-331 2451; www.hopetounhouse.com; house & grounds adult/child £8/4.25, grounds only £3.70/2.20; (♿) 10am-5.30pm Apr-Sep; (♿)) is one of Scotland's finest stately homes, with 150 acres of stunning landscaped grounds beside the Firth of Forth. There are two parts: the older built between 1699 and 1702 to Sir William Bruce's plans and dominated by a grand stairwell, the newer designed between 1720 and 1750 by William Adam and his sons, Robert and John. Lavishly furnished, the house is also known for its art collection, which includes paintings by Gainsborough, Ramsay and Raeburn.

NEWHAVEN

Immediately to the west of Leith, Newhaven was founded by James IV as another ship-building centre in 1511, but the port became a fishing community whose fishwives walked to Edinburgh selling herring from wicker creels on their backs. Modern development has dispelled the fishing village, with flats fighting for the water frontage with old cottages and terraces.

A beachside stroll is the best way to see the town, and if you want to get below the surface the old fish-market building beside the little harbour now houses the informative **Newhaven Heritage Museum** (☎ 0131-551 4165; 24 Pier Pl; admission free; (♿) noon-4.45pm). This small museum is tricked out with tableaux celebrating the lives of Newhaven fisherfolk and the town's stint as a naval dockyard. A 15-minute video illustrates the hard-working lifestyle that survived here until the 1950s, when overfishing put paid to the traditional source of income.

Buses 7, 10, 11 or 16 all head to Newhaven.

CRAIGMILLAR CASTLE

If you're after a crowd-free Scottish fortress, try **Craigmillar Castle** (HS; ☎ 0131-661 4445; Craigmillar Castle Rd; adult/child £3/1.20; (♿) 9.30am-6.30pm Apr-Sep, to 4.30pm Sat-Wed Oct-Mar). Dating from the 15th century, the tower house was based on David's Tower in Edinburgh Castle. Mary Queen of Scots took refuge here after the murder of her possible lover 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 3.5 miles southeast of the city centre. Take bus 33 eastbound from Princes St to Old Dalkeith Rd and walk 500m up Craigmillar Castle Rd.

ROSSLYN CHAPEL

Even with the hype of *The Da Vinci Code* film/book/lunchbox, this **chapel** (☎ 0131-440 2159; adult/concession/child £7/6/free; (♿) 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-4.45pm Sun) is one of the most uniquely beautiful in the British Isles.

Built in 1446 by William St Clair, Rosslyn is celebrated for its magnificent carvings, including biblical figures, examples of the pagan 'Green Man', and flowers, vines and imagery of plants apparently from America, which oddly pre-date Columbus' arrival. Rich in Templar and Masonic connections, it's no wonder the building has been central to many conspiracy theories, including that the Holy Grail or the body of Christ are buried beneath the chapel.

While prices have increased after the chapel's star turn, be thankful you're not paying the reputed £7000-a-day location fee of the 2006 movie; much of this windfall is being put towards restoration. You should also climb the stairs to the gantry around the chapel, which affords new perspectives on the building as well as the surrounding countryside and village, which is famously where Dolly the sheep was cloned. There's another bestselling novel in the Knights Templar getting involved in cloning.

Bus 15A runs from St Andrews Sq to Roslin village (£1 single, 30 minutes, hourly Monday to Friday, every two hours Saturday and twice a day Sunday). To drive take the A701 south and turn off in Bilston onto the B006 for Roslin.

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