

A restorative day and lovely food at the Restoration Yard

Dalkeith Country Park is just five miles from Edinburgh city centre. It is a huge estate where you can enjoy walking through the forests with your dog and exploring the grounds with waymarked walking and cycling trails to suit the whole family.



Opened in July 2016, the brand new Fort Douglas play park is an exciting playground for kids of all ages, with tree houses, slides and trees to climb. For that point in the day when you get tired there is also the Restoration Yard, a gorgeous new store and cafe in the former stableyard which has been lovingly restored to create a truly special day out.

The Restoration Yard features two floors of shopping, a café and take out, and a glass-walled restaurant space situated in the park's restored 18th-century stables and courtyard. There are loads of lovely gifts and artisan food products perfect for Christmas and birthday presents. There is also a spacious Wellbeing Lab housed on the first floor of the building which offers courses in mindfulness and emotional healing.



After a beautiful dog walk along the river we had a wander round the shops where we picked up some salted caramel popcorn and a make your own gin set, as you do!

Despite being very tempted by the size of the cakes on offer in the café we headed over to the restaurant. As you walk in, you can see all the chefs hard at work in the long open kitchen and also the fantastic view over the river Esk and the very exciting looking kids park. We did wonder how odd we

would look sneaking in without children for a chance to go on the slides!

Breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea are all on offer, the menu clearly inspired by local and healthy produce, catering to every situation from light meals, hearty mains, through to afternoon tea.



We decided to opt for a full meal rather than one of the lovely sandwiches and salads as I was feeling greedy and hungry! I went for chicken liver parfait which was wonderfully rich and had a lovely peppery hit of flavour, while my partner decided on the slightly healthier but just as tasty home cured salmon with cucumber and crème fraiche.

For our main courses, we had one venison ragu with mushrooms and pesto which was a huge portion and was more like a stew with lovely rich meat and fresh pasta. My risotto was equally large and a lovely combination of sweet garden peas, smoked haddock and a poached egg.

At this point I wished I had the room for one of the desserts on the menu but unfortunately was defeated! Although I did try a sneaky taste of the yummy sticky toffee pudding with dates and clotted cream ice cream.



We really loved the food at the restoration yard, not to mention the shopping of course and after coming walking for so many years in the estate it is brilliant to have such a lovely place for lunch. Plus if your kids aren't the walking type that adventure playground looks serious fun.

The park is open 7am-7pm, Fort Douglas 10am-3pm last admission (closes 4pm).

Restoration Yard Store 9.30am-6pm and Restoration Café 9.30am

– 5pm (last orders 4.30pm Mon-Fri, 5pm Sat-Sun). Closed Christmas Day, New Year's Day.

Fort Douglas tickets £3 – £5.

Looking to get that festive feeling? Then head over to [Dalkeith Country Park](#) and Restoration Yard this December for shopping, eating, tree buying and a little bit of 'me time'. Christmas trees for sale from 3 December 2016.