




John Lewis Edinburgh has a new Place to Eat

If you live in Edinburgh, you may be forgiven for thinking  that the work on what was the St James' Centre will never end.

We are promised a brand new 'shopping destination' – *Edinburgh St James* no less – in 2020, and in the meantime we try to be patient when faced with roadworks, construction sites, and the nearest Poundland now being miles away at the foot of Leith Walk.

In the midst of all this upheaval, **John Lewis** remains steadfastly open. You may have to drag yourself round to the back door to get in, but fear not, you can still get access to what journalist Stephen Bayley has called 'the grandmother of all department stores.' Unlike some grandmothers, however, John Lewis has been busy with a makeover of its own. £24million is being invested in the branch, and earlier this year the first fruits of the project were unveiled.

 The fifth floor of the store has been transformed into a brand new **Place to Eat** and **Smart Home**, a department showcasing audio, TV and the latest home tech. Smart Home brings connected gadgets and tech into one space, so that you can experience what it means to have a fully connected home – from an oven that lets you put dinner on before you leave the office, to a bedside device that monitors the quality of your sleep and a smart fridge that does your internet shopping for you. They've probably even got something to walk the dog.

The 40 feet window of the new Place to Eat, meanwhile,  offers magnificent views over north Edinburgh and the Firth of Forth – a view immortalised on The Proclaimers' *Sunshine on Leith* album cover. The new cafe certainly feels more

spacious than its predecessor – no longer do you have to squeeze past the world and its pushchairs to get to a table – and the decor is light and modern. There is a new emphasis on self-service – pour your own coffee, take your own cake from the central display – which has so far met with mixed reactions from customers, but you can if you wish still have your hot drinks made by staff at one of the counters. On our first visit the queue to pay was long, with only one till open, but on returning a few weeks' later teething problems appeared to have been sorted. And there's no doubt that that immortalised view is available to far more tables than before.



At a time when online shopping is becoming the norm, leaving some department stores looking increasingly jaded, John Lewis Edinburgh's renowned sensitivity to its customers' changing needs means that the store continues to lead the way in Scotland's capital city.

