

#MakeYourFringe from Today

The 2019 Edinburgh Festival Fringe sparked into life today with the launch of the official programme. As has become the norm, the Fringe will feature a diverse selection of work from the worlds of theatre, dance, circus, physical theatre, comedy, music, musicals and opera, cabaret and variety, children's shows, spoken word, free shows, exhibitions and events.

[This year's Fringe](#) features work from a record 63 countries, including 206 shows from mainland Europe. With themes ranging from climate change to true crime, space to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic identity, this year's festival tackles the most topical issues in the world today and brings together the best upcoming talent, well-known names, new venues and international work.



Launching the Fringe above Queensferry.

In order to help audiences navigate the festival and take a chance on something new, the Fringe Society have introduced the Inspiration Machine, an interactive, arcade-style machine that will randomly display videos from Fringe artists at the push of a button. The Inspiration Machine will be located on the Mound throughout August as well as online, and Fringe-goers young and old will be invited to roll up and see all

that the Fringe has to offer.

Also new for 2019 is the FringeMaker game, which will encourage visitors to explore different venues, see shows and tackle random Fringe challenges using a dedicated web-based app. In true treasure hunt style, players will be rewarded for breaking new ground and discovering hidden top hats located in each of the over 300 venues taking part in this year's festival.

A fantastic starting point for any Fringe-goer, the Virgin Money Street Events on the High Street and Mound Precinct will bring together 250 free shows a day from the world's greatest street performers for all the family to enjoy. Every Saturday shows on the West Parliament Square Stage will be fully BSL interpreted and, with dedicated wheelchair viewing spaces and sensory backpacks for visitors on the autism spectrum, the street will be more accessible than ever before this year.

Fringe Central is the festival's home from home for artists, journalists, fringe participants and visiting curators. At the heart of the festival, Fringe Central – our dedicated participants' hub – will play host to over 1,000 national and international media representatives, and 1,400 arts industry professionals looking for shows to book, co-commissioning and touring opportunities, making the Fringe one of the world's foremost places for performing artists to do business. This year's Fringe Central programme will feature strands such as "Health and Wellbeing" and "Breaking Down Barriers", the latter of which will focus on topics including disabled-led theatre-making, intersectional identities and diversity in the Fringe media landscape.

Launching the 2019 Fringe Programme, Shona McCarthy, Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, said: "The Fringe is a remarkable feat of engineering and human endeavour, and this year we are celebrating all the artists, writers, crew, staff, venue operators, audience members and

more who come together to Make Your Fringe.

“This year’s festival will feature 744 shows from Edinburgh, 963 from Scotland and work from a record 63 countries, which collectively help make the Fringe the greatest celebration of arts and culture on the planet. From the growing threat of global warming to the personal stories of migrants making a new home in a strange land; the 50th anniversary of the moon landings to exploring sex and true crime stories, this year’s programme will challenge perceptions, stimulate conversation, entertain, make you laugh, make you cry and inspire you.”



Not necessarily the recommended way to pick something to see... Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, said: "The Fringe is an economic powerhouse, generating £144 million for the Edinburgh economy and £173 million for Scotland's economy.

"This year, the programme demonstrates once again why it is one of the most important events in the international cultural calendar. Innovation and creativity will provide unforgettable moments for festival goers and will raise Scotland's standing on the world stage.

"The Scottish Government supports the Fringe through the EXPO funded Made in Scotland programme, a curated showcase of Scottish theatre dance and music. In 2019, the programme offers 22 shows that are made and produced in Scotland."

Cllr. Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Yet again the Edinburgh Festival Fringe promises to enthral, entertain and educate audiences young and old across the capital.

"This year's Fringe programme offers something for everyone, regardless of their age or interests, and I particularly welcome the Inspiration Machine as a means of boosting exposure of all that is on offer and the new FringeMaker game which will encourage even further participation. Both of these initiatives are a reflection of the Fringe itself – be willing to take a risk or two on new experiences and I'm sure both residents and visitors will rise to the challenge.

"The emphasis on participation is great and one we have encouraged through initiatives such as the Platforms for Creative Excellence (PLACE) Programme. We know from our People's Survey that two thirds of residents have attended a festival in Edinburgh in the last two years, with 72% believing festivals make the Capital a better place to live. After checking out the diverse programme for this year, I'm

sure local residents will continue to delight in everything the Fringe has to offer.”

And to find out what the Fringe has to offer, a full programme of information, events and ticketing is available from the [Edinburgh Fringe website](#)