

Edinburgh's Christmas 2019 – the highlights

Underbelly continues to produce Edinburgh's Christmas for the council until March 2022, and this year has a lot of the events which we have enjoyed before.

Following the Light Night on 17 November in the Old Town the Christmas season will get underway. This is the festival which most local people attend according to the numbers produced by the organisers. Around 300,000 people who visited in 2018 came from Edinburgh and the Lothians, hopefully all enjoying their 20% postcode discount.



PHOTO Eoin Carey

Here are some of the highlights :

The Johnnie Walker Bothy Bar will be placed on the Mound serving Hot Apple Toddy.

Silent Adventures will operate silent discos in East Princes Street Gardens on weekdays only.

In Castle Street Santa's Grotto will welcome children from 16 November to Christmas Eve. There will be a helter skelter here too as well as one in East Princes Street Gardens.

Winter Windows will show off the work of local schoolchildren in an exhibition staged in West Parliament Square as well as four other locations : White Park – Gorgie, Great Junction Street – by Leith Library, Main Street – Kirkliston and Goodtrees Community Centre – Gilmerton.



Community Christmas is a free, fun celebration to bring Edinburgh communities together to spread festive cheer across the whole city. Presented in collaboration with Double Take Projections, Underbelly's partners on Message from the Skies in 2018 and 2019, Community Christmas includes 12 locally significant buildings, across all four of Edinburgh's localities, come alive with festive projections over 12 consecutive nights, a new building every night.

Each event also features a different local choir performing some of the best-loved festive tunes alongside the projection. The locations are: Abbeyhill Primary School, Sandy's Community Centre in Craigmillar, Drumbrae Library and Community Hub, Corstorphine Community Centre, Gilmerton Community Centre, Pentland Community Centre – Oxfgangs, Westside Plaza – Wester Hailes, Granton Primary School, Inch Community Education Centre, The Craggs Centre by Holyrood Park, Craigentiny Community Centre and Broomhouse Community Hub.

Also new to Edinburgh's Christmas this year and returning after its sell out success at the Edinburgh International Festival 2019, Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller present Night Walk for Edinburgh.

This is an intimate, one-on-one video experience taking audiences on a specially curated tour of Edinburgh's Old Town at twilight. The unique opportunity allows participants to discover a new Edinburgh where history and memory collide and where our perceptions of what is real are challenged. Featuring a three-dimensional soundscape, Night Walk engages all senses as audiences are led through the capital by Janet Cardiff's voice, discovering the city past and present.

The Christmas market will be in East Princes Street Gardens offering a range of craft stalls and food and drink. There will be more stalls than before with additional space on the south side of East Princes Street Gardens used too. Visitors will be able to sample Aelder – Scottish hand-crafted wild elderberry liqueur, Edinburgh's Pickering's Gin, The Mac Shack, offering the best mac and cheese or the ultimate fish and chips at Alandas. The Caravan of Courage will present their feelgood vegan junk food menu with vegan pigs in blankets on special as part of the Christmas Market whilst meat lovers will rejoice at news that the Fox Hat brings their 'food theatre' to Edinburgh. And those looking for gift ideas will have a chance to explore the latest from Loch Ness Leather, a family-run Highland business presenting handmade

leather products.

The usual rides will be in place : the Star Flyer, Forth 1 Big Wheel, Christmas Tree Maze, Helter Skelter and the Santa Train.



Star Flyer and Scott Monument

24 Doors of Advent returns to offer a peek behind the scenes of some of Edinburgh's key institutions and venues, including the home to Scottish rugby, BT Murrayfield Stadium, The Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Centre, a centre for spiritual and mental wellness named in honour of the famous writer who spent many years studying spiritualism and the iconic Robin Chapel with its stunning stained-glass windows. Visit edinburghchristmas.com for the full line-up.

The Nativity Scene moves to the Mound beneath the Christmas Tree donated by the Hordaland County Council in Norway. The Nativity Carol Concert, organised in conjunction with Edinburgh Churches Together, takes place at 3.00pm on 1 December 2019 on Mound Place.

Edinburgh's Christmas favourite, Baby Loves Disco returns with Christmas Glitter Ball, and a top-class selection of festive pop tunes to get families into the party mood! The

ultimate daytime dance party, the event is aimed at parents and carers with babies, toddlers and young children (up to 6 years old) and features real club DJs mixing the best tunes of the last five decades, all at a baby-friendly volume! The fun beyond the dance floor continues with face-painting, play tents, arts and craft zone and many more, all included in the entry price. The show takes place at Assembly Rooms, twice daily on 15 and 21 December.

Christmas on Stage, the ultimate guide to festive on-stage entertainment in Edinburgh, brings together a dazzling new line-up of shows including Baby Loves Disco, and also Grid Iron Theatre Company and Traverse Theatre Company co-production of Strange Tales, centuries-old Chinese tale, Douglas Maxwell's I Can Go Anywhere, an anthem to solidarity and acceptance, the famous The Lion King at the Playhouse, the Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh's An Edinburgh Christmas Carol who are part of the exciting Light Night celebrations, Usher Hall with Children's Classic Concerts: Santa's Workshop on 8 December, The Chicago Blues Brothers – Christmas Party, 20 December as well as NOW That's What I Call Christmas on 21 December and Gilded Balloon at Rose Theatre with The Comedy Show: Christmas Special.

And then it will all be over and you will have Hogmanay to get ready for....