

Capital Coffee – Hideout Old Town

Nestled just around the corner from the Castle and the Grassmarket on Upper Bow is a lovely cosy nook.

Hideout Old Town opened in late 2019. It's great to be able to find good specialty coffee in such a busy, touristy area. As such, it is part of a trend towards better coffee in and around the Old Town that includes places such as [Room & Rumours](#) and [Santu](#). Hideout Old Town is consistently full, with many customers making their way up to it via the little dark stairway connecting Victoria Street with Upper Bow.

The Hideout team have made great use of the small and charming space with a selection of snug corners in which to relax. They've also made a nice feature of the 'ghost sign', advertising lemonade and ginger ale, on the outside wall. As with the original Hideout café in Leith, Hideout Old Town has a distinct retro feel with a range of intriguing old coffee makers on display, and music coming from cassettes. Anyone who grew up in the 80s or 90s will feel a wave of nostalgia as they browse the wall of tapes. Lou Reed and Bowie tunes were wafting around the café on my last visit.



Photo by Eva Vaporidi

The original Hideout (on Queen Charlotte Street in Leith) soon established itself as a popular spot for coffee and brunch. Its lovely arched windows allowed light to flood in, while the retro touches added to the relaxed, timeless feel. These included old reel to reel tape players, and vintage televisions repurposed as bookcases. The Leith branch was recently sold, and has been renamed the Old Spence Café by the new owners. Thankfully, they have retained the original décor and feel.

Hideout's manager admits that the disruptive tram works on Constitution Street coupled with the pandemic restrictions created a very testing environment. It meant that, despite all the efforts of him and his staff, there was 'little reward'. This, combined with the continued success of the Old Town café, led him to selling up after 10 years in Leith. He admits that it "felt weird to leave a business I'd built up from scratch". He now feels that, though he's still adapting to the new situation, it was "the right time to move on". The Leith café is, he's happy to say, in "good hands".

Hideout Old Town is certainly doing well. As soon as the doors

open at 9am, tourists begin to trickle in, keen to be caffeinated and fill their bellies with tasty scran. By 9.20 the place is usually hoaching, with seats hard to come by. The test for a very busy place such as this is maintaining standards when the orders come pouring in. On the basis of my experience, they manage to serve well made coffee throughout the day, as well as maintaining good, cheery customer service. They clearly have a well trained team.

At Hideout Old Town you can enjoy coffee made using Hideout's own custom blend, pulled on a super slick Slayer machine. The coffee is nicely balanced with warming notes.



As well as a nice selection of sandwiches, filled croissants etc, they serve tasty soups which are ideal on a dreich day in the capital. A bit of a signature dish of the café is their fantastic honey cake, which makes a great combo with a hot drink. Hideout also serves Teapigs teas and a range of sodas. Well worth a visit, if you can dodge the tourist hordes.

Hideout Old Town
5 Upper Bow
Edinburgh
EH1 2JN

Open Mon-Sun – 9.00am to 5.00pm.