

Resolving to fill the calendar with delicious escapades

While some brave souls are navigating the treacherous waters of Dry January and embracing New Year resolutions with the determination of a squirrel hoarding acorns, I find myself in a different camp.

Why, you ask? Because January is my birthday month, and so no, I don't do Dry January. I firmly believe that the best way to combat the post-holiday blues is with a fork and knife in hand.

In what's often considered the bleakest and most depressing month, I've adopted a different kind of resolution. Instead of pledging allegiance to kale smoothies and lettuce leaves, I've resolved to fill my calendar with delicious escapades and epicurean adventures.

Curious about what's on my agenda? My diary is not just a collection of dates: it's a gastronomic roadmap to happiness. So, buckle up, grab your cutlery, and join me on this delicious journey and a feast for the senses.

New Openings

Popular (for some but not for me!) vegan restaurant Harmonium on the corner of Broughton Street, which closed after six years of business last April, has been replaced with a much meatier concept, **The Howlin' Hound**, serving up the finest artisanal hot-dogs (if there can be such a thing) and cocktails. And at weekends, its downstairs morphs into Don Gatto's, a Champagne and cocktail Speakeasy. <https://www.thehowlinhound.com/>

A new shop has opened in Stockbridge 'for foodies, by foodies.' **Stockroom** at 62 Raeburn Place next to Oxfam is run by the team behind Pantry, just up the road at Circus Place. www.stockroomedinburgh.co.uk

Events

Distillery Discovery Thursdays at Topsy Midgie – 11th January (£20)– Immerse yourself in Scottish history and folklore at Topsy Midgie, Scotland's Bar of the Year, and discover the delights of Glenkinchie. Enjoy five selected drams on the night. <https://www.tipsymidgie.com/distillerydiscovery>

Mixtapes Supper Club – An intimate gathering of up to 10 guests, all sitting around the same table, creating a shared culinary experience, the supper club events take place each Saturday in Fhior's private dining room. Inspired by the diverse creativity of a music mixtape, the monthly changing menu is a compilation of classics, news releases and seasonal wonders – the exclusivity of seats at the table allows menus to feature rare, more unique ingredients that are in too short supply for the restaurant's main menu. Each ticket comes as a complete package (£160 pp). All the food, drinks, additions, and service are inclusive. No extra costs or surprises on the night. <https://fhior.com/mixtapes/>

Burns and Beyond Festival – 25th-28th January 2024, has a packed programme of traditional and contemporary art and culture from across Scotland and beyond. The Burns & Beyond Festival Club features a programme of special headline shows, while the National Museum of Scotland presents a special Burns Night edition of their Museum Lates: Big Burns Ceilidh, with an evening of twirlin' and birlin' on a grand-scale.
www.burnsandbeyond.com

100 Best Australian Wines Festival with Matthew Jukes in conjunction with Wine Events Scotland – 23rd March 2024 at the Edinburgh Academy. A fantastic wine tasting of renowned international wine writer Matthew's favourite wines from all corners of Australia, there are two sessions available to book. Mingle with Matthew during the day and speak to some of the importers who work with these wines and maybe book into one of the masterclasses.
<https://wineeventsscotland.co.uk/events/100-best-australian-wines-festival-matthew-jukes/>



L-R – Paddy Fletcher and Ian Stirling founders of Port of Leith Distillery PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Tours

The Scotch Whisky Experience on Castle Hill has undergone a £3m transformation to enhance the way visitors engage with the making of Scotch whisky. Designed by attraction architects Hatto + Partners, visitors journey through three key areas; 'Origins', 'The Art of Whisky Making' and 'Maturation'. Each zone is powered by rich narratives, brought to life through cutting-edge technology and manifested as a captivating elemental narrator, which embodies the 'spirit of whisky', which weaves in and out of the tour underpinned by the live guide. The Experience is available in 20 languages with family-friendly and tailored tours and is fully wheelchair accessible. Open daily with tours available from 10:00 – 17:00. Tours range from £21.00 per person and are available to

book online:

www.scotchwhiskyexperience.co.uk

Port of Leith Distillery Tour – Be amazed on a tour of Scotland's first vertical distillery – a remarkable new 9-storey building in Edinburgh's historic whisky district of Leith. The 90-minute tour weaves a magical story of two friends who wanted to make an extraordinary whisky, as you're guided through the production process as well as filling your very own 10ml bottle of their spirit. And when you've finished head up to the top-floor bar for well-crafted cocktails, thoughtfully curated small plates, and an impressive selection of new-wave whisky – all set against panoramic views of the city and water beyond. <https://www.leithdistillery.com/>

The Lind & Lime Gin Tour – The makers of this fabulous Scottish Gin have pulled together their favourite things of any distillery they've ever visited and come up with an experience that combines a tour, a tasting, a bottle filling, and cocktail making. What's not to like? <https://lindandlime.com/thetour>

Cheers to a year filled with good company, great food, and the occasional guilty pleasure. Let the culinary escapades begin.

