

Food festivals and whisky wanderings in July

For foodies in Edinburgh, July promises an exciting lineup of events.

First, you'll need to be quick off the mark to book tickets for my first recommendation, Master Chef finalist Sarah Rankin's talk at [Topping Bookstore](#) on 2nd July at 7.30 pm.

Her new book, *Kith: Scottish Seasonal Food for Family and Friends* is a delightful collection of traditional and contemporary recipes celebrating Scotland's versatile larder. I had the pleasure of attending the book launch and sampling some of the dishes, and this event is not to be missed.

Edinburgh Food Festival Hosts British Street Food Awards 2024 (19-28 July)

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Edinburgh Food Festival, running from 19 to 28 July at Assembly George Square Gardens. The festival has teamed up with the British Street Food Awards, organised by Food Mutiny, with the grand final taking place on the first weekend, 20 and 21 July.

This free-to-enter event is perfectly timed just before the Assembly Festival's Fringe season and coincides with the Jazz Festival, featuring performances in the Spiegel tents. If the weather is kind, it's the perfect setting to enjoy Scotland's best food and drink vendors, talks, demonstrations, and hands-

on workshops from top chefs and producers. The street food on offer is simply irresistible.

Unfortunately, I'll miss the British Street Food Awards as I'll be celebrating my godson's 21st in Sussex. However, traders will be competing for the People's Choice Award, and to impress a panel of judges, with winners advancing to the finals in London.

britishstreetfood.co.uk and edfoodfest.com

A Whistlestop Whisky Tour of Edinburgh

Recently, I had the pleasure of hosting two different sets of friends from the south, which gave me the chance to plan an action-packed weekend showcasing Edinburgh's finest sights and tastes. As a whisky enthusiast and winner of the Reader's Recipe at Observer Food Monthly's Food Awards in 2016, I'm always keen to convert whisky sceptics among my friends.

It's fascinating how just three ingredients—malted barley, spring water, and yeast—can produce such a diverse array of whiskies, influenced by factors like barrel type, ageing time, and geography.

I recommend starting with a tour at [Johnnie Walker](#) on Princes Street or the [Scotch Whisky Experience](#), a five-star visitor attraction at the top of the Royal Mile.

The latter has recently undergone a £3m makeover and houses the impressive [Diageo Claive Vidiz Scotch Whisky Collection](#), a collection of 3,384 whisky bottles, and is the jewel in the crown of their tour and tasting experience. For an elevated experience, opt for the gold tour and taste four contrasting regional malts at the end of the tour in the comfort of their [Amber restaurant and whisky bar](#).

Alternatively, visit a local distillery. Choose from [The Port](#)

[of Leith](#), Scotland's first vertical distillery, a remarkable new 9-storey building in Edinburgh's historic whisky district of Leith or [the Holyrood Distillery](#), in Edinburgh's historic old town, under the shadow of the magnificent Salisbury's Crag. Whether you are visiting a distillery for the first time or an aficionado, both tours offer a fascinating insight into whisky production.

And if you're at Holyrood Distillery, don't miss a trip to the award-winning and one of the best whisky bars in Edinburgh just across the road, [Topsy Midgie](#), owned by Whisky Guru of the Year, Colin Hinds, with the establishment voted Whisky Bar of the Year 2023 and 2024.

Topsy Midgie is any whisky enthusiast or novice's hidden gem, with over 2,500 whiskies to taste. This delightful bar has whisky-based paintings adorning the walls from Colin's talented partner, Adele Conn aka Tartan Spoon, a fellow food writer and influencer. When distillers visit, they are given the opportunity to sign their own personalised whisky painting. You might also be 'Colin-ised' – with a polaroid of you added to the wall joining all those other whisky sceptics that Colin has finally converted to enjoy or appreciate a dram or two.

If you're planning for August and have Festival visitors, after a day of shows why not book in for one of Colin's [Topsy Midgie Midnight Treats](#), pairing special drams with Scottish canapés. It's an experience not to be missed and highly recommended for booking. You guaranteed an entertaining evening, as I recently experienced, and possibly a wee hangover!

And talking of booking, keep your eyes peeled on The Edinburgh Reporter for my Fringe tips and recommendations, coming soon. Over the past 20 years, I've curated a list of my top 75-100 Fringe shows, which has become a go-to for friends and family overwhelmed by the myriad of choices.

In the meantime, Sláinte!



Sarah Rankin and her new book, Kith



Walk with Johnnie Walker to discover your whisky profile



Enjoying the Johnnie Walker Tour with friends



The Scotch Whisky Experience tour will help you discover the whisky making process



Tipsy Midgie, the best whisky bar in Edinburgh



Adele Conn's whisky bottle and distillery images adorn the wall at Topsy Midgie



Enjoying a wee dram or two at Topsy Midgie with friends.



Whisky Guru Colin Hinds at Topsy Midgie



You too could join the wall of whisky sceptics celebrated at Topsy Midgie



