

The city is awash with cocktails and mocktails

Edinburgh Cocktail Week is now pouring...

I'm away for the legendary "Edinburgh Cocktail Week" this year, which runs until 20 October in Festival Square, so I'm sadly missing out on exploring over 100 bars offering £5 cocktails and mocktails. For cocktail lovers (and mocktail fans), it's a paradise of flavours and creativity.

Entry to the **Cocktail Village** is free with a wristband, which costs £9, and once inside, you'll discover 24 pop-up bars, each serving signature cocktails starting at just £5. This year brings an extra touch of glamour with a new **Champagne Lounge** in partnership with 'PIAFF Champagne'. On top of that, there's a live music stage showcasing local musicians and headline acts, street food trucks, and—for the first time ever—a dedicated *No & Low Bar* for those seeking alcohol-free options. It's the perfect spot for a fun day out with friends, whether you're sipping, savouring, or just soaking in the atmosphere.



Some of the pop-up bars to look out for include Edinburgh Gin, Dead Man's Fingers, El Jimador Tequila, Au Vodka, BrewDog, Wonderland Cocktails, Black Ivy Bar, Freddy's, Peroni, Altos Tequila,* and many more, along with the fabulous *PIAFF Champagne Lounge* and that highly anticipated No & Low Bar.

Tales of the Old Town

While I'm missing out on **Edinburgh Cocktail Week** this year, I did manage to get a sneak preview of something equally exciting—the new **Tales of the Old Town** cocktail menu launched last week at the Marriott Hotel in Holyrood. This new menu, curated by Bacardi Martini, takes inspiration from Edinburgh's rich history, with each cocktail representing a tale, legend, or landmark of the city. What makes this launch even more special is their partnership with [Invisible Cities](#), a social enterprise that trains people with experiences of homelessness to become tour guides. Their tours aim to challenge perceptions and break the stigma around homelessness.

To bring history to life, the Tales of the Old Town menu offers eight signature cocktails, each inspired by an iconic landmark from Edinburgh's Old Town. The best part? They've teamed up with **Invisible Edinburgh** to offer a self-guided walking tour based on these very locations. It's a wonderful way to explore the city's history—and maybe indulge in a drink or two along the way! And if you're not drinking or prefer to pace yourself, there are non-alcoholic versions of all the cocktails available.

Here are just a few of the standouts I got to sample:

- **Canongate Kir Royale** – A refreshing mix of St Germain elderflower liqueur, sparkling wine, and thyme, inspired by Canongate Kirk, where poets and royalty rest.
- **Royal Mile Remedy**– A robust blend of Craigallachie 13 peated whisky, lemon, ginger, lemongrass syrup, and orange bitters, a nod to the famous Royal Mile.
- **Mercat Mule** – Grey Goose vodka, Lucky Liqueur peach, lemon, raspberries, and ginger beer, paying homage to the Mercat

Cross, topped with Scotland's iconic unicorn.

– **Dynamic Earthquake**– A punchy mix of Parton Silver tequila, rhubarb liqueur, and rhubarb soda, celebrating the wonder of Dynamic Earth, just across from the hotel.

Each cocktail costs between £14 and £15, and you can enjoy them in the bar, lounge, or restaurant at the Marriott. It's an experience that brings Edinburgh's history to your glass.

[Marriott Edinburgh – Tales of the City Cocktails](#)







LOYAL GREYFRIARS

Aberfeldy 12, heather honey syrup,
Angostura bitters, orange bitters

15









Streets ahead: my new favourite podcast – Café Hope

As if all this cocktail and mocktail excitement wasn't enough, I've also discovered a new favourite podcast: Café Hope. In their latest episode (7 October 2024), they featured none other than Zakia Moulaoui, founder of charity, Invisible Cities. You can [listen to the episode here](#), and hear Zakia talk about the work she's doing to make a real difference

through these tours by 'Showing off the Streets'.

"Café Hope" is Radio 4's virtual coffee shop, where guests pop in for a brew and a chat with presenter Rachel Burden to talk about how they're making the world a better place in big and small ways. Zakia is certainly one of those inspiring people making positive change happen, and her work with 'Invisible Cities' is a testament to that.

If you're in Edinburgh for the Cocktail Week or planning a visit soon, there's plenty to sip, savour, and discover. And if you fancy making a difference why not consider booking yourself onto one of the tours for a different view of this fabulous city.

<https://invisible-cities.org/>