

10 Great Things to Do in Edinburgh

Edinburgh, Scotland's enchanting capital, is a city that effortlessly blends ancient history with a modern, dynamic vibe.

From its striking architecture to its vibrant festivals, this city offers endless activities for visitors of all interests.

Whether you're drawn to history, culture, nature, or food, there's something here for everyone.

Let's explore ten of the best things to do in Edinburgh, ensuring you make the most of your visit.



Photo by [Jonathan Ricci](#) on [Unsplash](#)

1. Explore Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Castle is a must-see landmark and one of the most iconic sites in Scotland. Perched atop Castle Rock, this ancient fortress has served as a royal residence, military

stronghold, and symbol of Scottish heritage for centuries.

The castle houses the famous Crown Jewels and the Stone of Destiny, both steeped in royal history. Visitors can also enjoy the One O'Clock Gun, a daily cannon-firing tradition (except on Sundays) that has been in place since 1861.

Don't forget to admire the sweeping views of the city skyline from the castle's vantage points. The castle also features the National War Museum, where you can learn about Scotland's military history through fascinating exhibits.

2. Stroll Along the Royal Mile

The Royal Mile is the beating heart of Edinburgh's Old Town, stretching from the majestic Edinburgh Castle to the historic Palace of Holyroodhouse.

This bustling thoroughfare is packed with historic buildings, souvenir shops, restaurants, and pubs. The atmosphere is lively, with street performers and musicians adding to the charm.

Take your time exploring the hidden alleys, known locally as "closes," which branch off from the Royal Mile.

Each close has its own story, often tied to Edinburgh's rich and sometimes dark history. For example, Mary King's Close offers a glimpse into the lives of the people who lived here centuries ago.

3. Hike Arthur's Seat

Arthur's Seat, an ancient volcano located in Holyrood Park, is the perfect escape for those who enjoy outdoor adventures.

The summit offers panoramic views of the city and its surroundings, making it a favorite among locals and tourists alike. The hike is relatively easy, with several paths leading to the top. The best time to hike is early morning or late

afternoon when the light creates a magical atmosphere.

On your way up, you might encounter Salisbury Crags, a series of dramatic cliffs that add to the area's rugged beauty.

Arthur's Seat is not only a natural wonder but also a place steeped in history and myth, believed by some to be the legendary site of Camelot.

4. Visit the National Museum of Scotland

The National Museum of Scotland is a treasure trove of history, science, art, and culture. It's a perfect destination for families, solo travelers, or anyone looking to learn more about Scotland and the world.

The museum's galleries cover everything from natural history and ancient civilizations to cutting-edge technology and fashion.

One of the museum's star attractions is Dolly the Sheep, the first mammal to be cloned. Don't miss the Victorian Grand Gallery, with its stunning glass ceiling and impressive exhibits.

After exploring, head to the rooftop terrace for breathtaking views of Edinburgh's skyline.

5. Discover the Magic of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

If you visit Edinburgh in August, you'll be swept up in the magic of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This world-famous arts festival transforms the city into a hub of creativity and entertainment, with performers taking over theaters, streets, and even pubs.

The Fringe is open to all kinds of acts, from comedians and musicians to dancers and dramatists.

Beyond the Fringe, the city also hosts the Edinburgh

International Festival, featuring high-caliber performances in music, opera, and theater.

Together, these [Edinburgh events](#) make August a thrilling time to experience the city's cultural vibrancy.

6. Wander Through Dean Village

Nestled along the Water of Leith, Dean Village is a picturesque escape from the city's hustle and bustle. This historic village, once home to milling industries, now offers a tranquil retreat with its cobblestone streets, quaint cottages, and leafy surroundings.

Take a leisurely walk along the Water of Leith Walkway, which meanders through the village and offers stunning views of the Dean Bridge and St Bernard's Well.

Dean Village feels like stepping into a storybook, making it a favorite spot for photography enthusiasts and those seeking a peaceful moment in nature.

7. Savor Scotch Whisky at a Tasting Tour

Scotland is renowned for its whisky, and Edinburgh offers plenty of opportunities to sample this beloved drink. Whether you're a connoisseur or a curious beginner, a whisky tasting tour is an excellent way to dive into Scotland's national drink.

The Scotch Whisky Experience on the Royal Mile provides an engaging and educational journey through the whisky-making process.

You'll learn about the different regions of Scotland and their unique whisky characteristics, from smoky Islay malts to smooth Highland whiskies.

And, of course, you'll get to savor a dram or two. It's an experience that combines history, craftsmanship, and flavor.

8. Explore the Royal Botanic Garden

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a haven for nature lovers. Spanning over 70 acres, the garden is home to an impressive collection of plants from around the world.

Highlights include the Glasshouses, which house exotic tropical plants, and the Rock Garden, showcasing alpine and Mediterranean species.

The gardens are a peaceful retreat where you can wander among colorful blooms, majestic trees, and serene ponds.

Whether you're a botany enthusiast or just looking for a quiet place to relax, the Royal Botanic Garden is a wonderful escape.

9. Delve into the Dark Side on a Ghost Tour

Edinburgh is a city with a haunted past, making it the perfect place for a ghost tour. These tours take you through the city's most haunted spots, including underground vaults, eerie graveyards, and shadowy closes.

You'll hear chilling tales of famous characters like Burke and Hare, the infamous body snatchers, and the mysterious Greyfriars Bobby.

One of the most popular tours is the Edinburgh Dungeon, which combines theatrical storytelling with spooky history.

Whether you believe in ghosts or not, these tours are a thrilling way to explore the city's darker side.

10. Enjoy the Food Scene

Edinburgh's food scene is as diverse as its attractions. The city is home to a mix of traditional Scottish cuisine and innovative modern dining.

For a taste of tradition, try haggis, neeps, and tatties, a

hearty dish that pairs perfectly with a dram of whisky. For something more contemporary, visit one of the city's many Michelin-starred restaurants.

Street food markets like the Pitt Market are great for sampling a variety of dishes, while cozy cafés offer delightful afternoon teas. Whatever your culinary preferences, Edinburgh's food scene is sure to satisfy.

Final Thoughts

Edinburgh is a city that never ceases to amaze. From its historical landmarks and vibrant festivals to its natural beauty and culinary delights, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Whether you're a first-time visitor or a seasoned traveler, these ten activities will help you experience the best of what Edinburgh has to offer.

Start planning your adventure today and discover why this city is one of the most beloved destinations in the world.