

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN & AROUND EDINBURGH

Edinburgh and Scotland provide a wealth of activities and sights to explore including castles, tours, hillwalking and magnificent scenery. Below is a selection of some of the highlights, but is by no means an exhaustive list.

EDINBURGH CASTLE

Edinburgh Castle is a historic fortress which dominates the skyline of the city of Edinburgh, Scotland, from its position on the Castle Rock. Although few of the current buildings pre-date the 16th century, there has been a castle on the extinct volcano since the reign of David I in the 12th century, with evidence of human occupation since 2nd century AD. A visit to Edinburgh castle provides dramatic views of Edinburgh and a brief history of Scotland.

Opening hours: 9.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, to 5pm Oct-Mar, last admission 1hr before closing

W: www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

A: Castle Esplanade

£: Adult/child £16.50/9.90, audioguide £3.50

SCOTTISH GALLERY OF MODERN ART, SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY & SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Edinburgh's gallery of modern art is split between two impressive neoclassical buildings surrounded by landscaped grounds some 500m west of Dean Village. As well as showcasing a stunning collection of paintings by the popular, post-Impressionist Scottish Colourists – in Reflections, Balloch, Leslie Hunter pulls off the improbable trick of making Scotland look like the south of France – the gallery is the starting point for a walk along the Water of Leith, following a trail of sculptures by Antony Gormley.

Designed by William Playfair, the Scottish National Gallery is an imposing classical building with its Ionic porticoes dates from the 1850s. Its octagonal rooms, lit by skylights, have been restored to their original Victorian decor of deep-green carpets and dark-red walls. The gallery houses an important collection of European art from the Renaissance to post-Impressionism, with works by Verrocchio (Leonardo da Vinci's teacher), Tintoretto, Titian, Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, Vermeer, El Greco, Poussin, Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Turner, Constable, Monet, Pissarro, Gauguin and Cézanne.

The Venetian Gothic palace of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery illustrates Scottish history through paintings, photographs and sculptures, putting faces to famous names from Scotland's past and present, from Robert Burns, Mary, Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie to Sean Connery, Billy Connolly and poet Jackie Kay. The gallery's interior is decorated in Arts and Crafts style, and nowhere more splendidly than in the Great Hall. Above the Gothic colonnade a processional frieze painted by William Hole in 1898 serves as a 'visual encyclopedia' of famous Scots, shown in chronological order from Calgacus (the chieftain who led the Caledonian tribes into battle against the Romans) to writer and philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). The murals on the first-floor balcony depict scenes from Scottish history, while the ceiling is painted with the constellations of the night sky.

Opening hours: 10am-5pm. Scottish National Gallery is open to 7pm Thu

W: www.nationalgalleries.org

Bus: 13

A: 75 Belford Rd & Princes Street

£: free. Prices for special exhibitions vary

ST GILES CATHEDRAL

Properly called the High Kirk of Edinburgh (it was only a true cathedral – the seat of a bishop – from 1633 to 1638 and from 1661 to 1689), the church was named after the patron saint of cripples and beggars. The interior lacks grandeur but is rich in history: a Norman-style church was built here in 1126 but was destroyed by English invaders in 1385 (the only substantial remains are the central piers that support the tower). St Giles was at the heart of the Scottish Reformation, and John Knox served as minister here from 1559 to 1572. One of the most interesting corners of the kirk is the Thistle Chapel, built in 1911 for the Knights of the Most Ancient & Most Noble Order of the Thistle. The elaborately carved Gothic-style stalls have canopies topped with the helms and arms of the 16 knights – look out for the bagpipe-playing angel amid the vaulting.

Opening hours: 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Oct-Apr

W: www.stgilescathedral.org.uk

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

A: High St

£: suggested donation £3

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

Broad, elegant Chambers St is dominated by the long facade of the National Museum of Scotland. Its extensive collections are spread between two buildings, one modern, one Victorian – the golden stone and striking modern architecture of the new building, opened in 1998, is one of the city's most distinctive landmarks. The five floors of the museum trace the history of Scotland from its geological beginnings to the 1990s, with many imaginative and stimulating exhibits. Audioguides are available in several languages.

The new building connects with the original Victorian museum, dating from 1861, the stolid, grey exterior of which gives way to a beautifully bright and airy, glass-roofed exhibition hall. The old building houses an eclectic collection covering natural history, archaeology, scientific and industrial technology, and the decorative arts of ancient Egypt, Islam, China, Japan, Korea and the West.

Opening hours: 10am-5pm

W: www.nms.ac.uk
A: Chambers St

Bus: 2, 23, 27, 35, 41, 42, 45
£: free. Prices for special exhibitions vary

EDINBURGH BOTANIC GARDEN

Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden is the second oldest institution of its kind in Britain (after Oxford), and one of the most respected in the world. Founded near Holyrood in 1670 and moved to its present location in 1823, its 70 beautifully landscaped acres include splendid Victorian glasshouses (admission £5.50), colourful swathes of rhododendron and azalea, and a world famous rock garden.

The John Hope Gateway visitor centre is housed in a striking, environmentally-friendly building overlooking the main entrance on Arboretum Pl, and has exhibitions on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development, as well as displays of rare plants from the institution's collection and a specially created biodiversity garden.

Opening hours: 10am-6pm Mar-Sep, to 5pm Feb & Oct, to 4pm Nov-Jan

W: www.rbge.org.uk
A: Arboretum Place

Bus: 8, 23, 27
£: free. Glasshouses £5.50

REAL MARY KING'S CLOSE

Edinburgh's 18th-century City Chambers were built over the sealed-off remains of Mary King's Close, and the lower levels of this medieval Old Town alley have survived almost unchanged amid the foundations for 250 years. Now open to the public, this spooky, subterranean labyrinth gives a fascinating insight into the everyday life of 17th-century Edinburgh. Costumed characters lead tours through a 16th-century town house and the plague-stricken home of a 17th-century gravedigger. The scripted tour, complete with ghostly tales and gruesome tableaux, can seem a little naff, milking the scary and scatological aspects of the close's history for all they're worth. But there are many things of genuine interest to see; there's something about the crumbling 17th-century tenement room that makes the hairs rise on the back of your neck, with tufts of horsehair poking from the collapsing lath-and-plaster, the ghost of a pattern on the walls, and the ancient smell of stone and dust thick in your nostrils.

Opening hours: 10am-9pm daily Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Sun-Thu, 10am-9pm Fri & Sat Nov-Mar

W: www.realmarykingsclose.com
A: 2 Warriston's Close, High St

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42
£: adult/child £14.50/8.75

SURGEONS' HALL MUSEUM

Housed in a grand Ionic temple designed by William Playfair in 1832, these three fascinating museums were originally established as teaching collections. The History of Surgery Museum provides a look at surgery in Scotland from the 15th century – when barbers supplemented their income with bloodletting, amputations and other surgical procedures – to the present day. The highlight is the exhibit on Burke and Hare, which includes Burke's death mask and a pocketbook made with his skin.

Opening hours: 10am-5pm daily Apr-Oct, noon-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar

W: www.museum.rcsed.ac.uk
A: Nicolson St

Bus: all South Bridge buses
£: adult/child £6/3.50

PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

This palace is the royal family's official residence in Scotland, but is more famous as the 16th-century home of the ill-fated Mary, Queen of Scots. The highlight of the tour is Mary's Bed Chamber, home to the unfortunate queen from 1561 to 1567. It was here that her jealous second husband, Lord Darnley, restrained the pregnant queen while his henchmen murdered her secretary – and favourite – Rizzio. A plaque in the neighbouring room marks the spot where he bled to death.

The palace developed from a guest house, attached to Holyrood Abbey, which was extended by King James IV in 1501. The oldest surviving part of the building, the northwestern tower, was built in 1529 as a royal apartment for James V and his wife, Mary of Guise. Mary, Queen of Scots spent six turbulent years here, during which time she debated with John Knox, married both her second and third husbands, and witnessed the murder of her secretary David Rizzio.

Opening hours: 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4.30pm Nov-Mar

W: www.royalcollection.org.uk
A: Horse Wynd

Bus: 6, 35
£: adult/child incl audioguide £12/7.20

ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA

Housed in a grand Ionic temple designed by William Playfair in 1832, these three fascinating museums were originally established as teaching collections. The History of Surgery Museum provides a look at surgery in Scotland from the 15th century – when barbers supplemented their income with bloodletting, amputations and other surgical procedures – to the present day. The highlight is the exhibit on Burke and Hare, which includes Burke's death mask and a pocketbook made with his skin.

Opening hours: 9.30am-6pm Jul-Sep, to 5.30pm Apr-Jun & Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar, last admission 90min before closing

W: www.royalyachtbritannia.co.uk
A: Ocean Terminal

Bus: 11, 22, 34, 35, 36
£: adult/child £15/8.50

EDINBURGH SIGHTSEEING HOP-ON HOP-OFF TOUR

With great views from the top of the bus, strategically placed stops and an interesting commentary, this City Sightseeing tour is the best way to see the sights of Edinburgh. You can hop-on and off as many times as you like aboard this open-top double-decker bus. There are 14 stops and the entire route takes approximately 60 minutes. The bus departs every 20 minutes from each stop. Tickets are valid for 24 hours from first use. Travel through the city with ease on this City Sightseeing hop-on hop-off bus tour. Tour highlights include the Edinburgh Castle, Palace of Holyrood House, the historic Royal Mile and Our Dynamic Earth.

Departure: All year round (excluding 25 December) Monday- Friday: 9:30am- 5:50pm every 20 minutes. Saturday- Sunday: 9:30am- 6:00pm every 15 minutes. July- August : 9:35am- 8:00pm every 7-20 minutes. Nov-March: 9:30am - 4:00pm every 20-30 minutes

W: <http://edinburghtour.com/>

£: 15

MURDER AND MYSTERY WALKING TOUR OF EDINBURGH

Take a look at Edinburgh's dark side, including tales of witchcraft, plague and torture on this Murder and Mystery Walking Tour of Edinburgh. Visit the scenes of many horrific tortures, murders and supernatural happenings as you walk along eerie alleyways and creepy courtyards of the Old Town. Your ghostly guide will blend history with humor and facts with fables, while "jumper-ooters" provide guaranteed ghastly appearances. This walking tour takes place in the cobbled streets of Edinburgh in all seasons. In the interests of safety please dress appropriately and wear sensible shoes.

Departure: 7:00pm October 1 - March 26 (time may vary) 9:00pm March 27 - September 30

W: <http://www.witcherytours.com/>

A: The Royal Mile, Edinburgh

£: from £10

UNDERGROUND VALUTS WALKING TOUR OF EDINBURGH

Discover the underground vaults of Edinburgh city. Far below the busy, bustling Edinburgh streets there lies a dark, quiet and forgotten place. These wonderful dark rooms of arched ceilings, fireplaces and 18th century wine vaults lie beneath the South Bridge, one of the city's main thoroughfares.

The late 18th century was a time of great expansion and innovation in Edinburgh. To improve access from the Old Town to the new developments two enormous structures were built, the North and South Bridges. By 1790 there were almost one hundred businesses active on the South Bridge with their workshops in the underground Vaults below. As well as lack of natural light, the Vaults suffered from water seeping from the South Bridge above, stalactites are evidence of this. But, there was a darker side too. To the immediate south stands Infirmary Street, where Edinburgh's medical school used to be. It was here that the notorious pair, Burke and Hare, sold the bodies of their murdered victims. Could the vaults have stored a different sort of merchandise?

Departure: April - October 2:00pm and 4:00pm Daily. November- March 4:00pm Daily and 2:00pm (Saturday and Sunday)

W: <https://www.mercattours.com/view-tour/historic-underground>

A: The Royal Mile, Edinburgh

£: from £10

TOURS AND ACTIVITIES NEAR EDINBURGH

ROSSLYN CHAPEL

The success of Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* and the subsequent Hollywood film has seen a flood of visitors descend on Scotland's most beautiful and enigmatic church – Rosslyn Chapel. The chapel was built in the mid-15th century for William St Clair, third earl of Orkney, and the ornately carved interior – at odds with the architectural fashion of its time – is a monument to the mason's art, rich in symbolic imagery. Hourly talks by qualified guides are included in the admission price.

As well as flowers, vines, angels and biblical figures, the carved stones include many examples of the pagan 'Green Man'; other figures are associated with Freemasonry and the Knights Templar. Intriguingly, there are also carvings of plants from the Americas that predate Columbus' voyage of discovery. The symbolism of these images has led some researchers to conclude that Rosslyn is some kind of secret Templar repository, and it has been claimed that hidden vaults beneath the chapel could conceal anything from the Holy Grail or the head of John the Baptist to the body of Christ himself. The chapel is owned by the Episcopal Church of Scotland and services are still held here on Sunday mornings.

The chapel is on the eastern edge of the village of Roslin, 7 miles south of Edinburgh's centre. Lothian Bus 15 (not 15A) runs from the west end of Princes St in Edinburgh to Roslin (£1.60, 30 minutes, every 30 minutes).

Opening hours: 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Oct-Mar, noon-4.45pm Sun year-round
W: www.rosslynchapel.org.uk Bus: 15
A: Chapel Loan, Roslin £: adult/child £9/free

LOCH NESS, GLENCOE AND THE HIGHLANDS SMALL-GROUP DAY TRIP FROM EDINBURGH

Tour description provided by Viator

Go on a fantastic tour from Edinburgh to explore the legendary myths of Loch Ness and enjoy the diverse range of Scottish Highland scenery. Drive through the forests and rivers of Highland Perthshire and get a glimpse of dramatic Glen Coe – the site of the Massacre of Glencoe. See Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles, and enjoy a typical Scottish picnic lunch before taking in magnificent views of the Forth Bridge. You also have the opportunity to take a 1-hour boat cruise on the loch (own expense). Your Loch Ness and Scottish Highlands day tour ends in Edinburgh around 8pm.

Hours: Departs 7.45am from Royal Mile. Return 8pm.

W: <https://www.viator.com/tours/Edinburgh/Full-Day-Trip-to-Loch-Ness-and-the-Scottish-Highlands/d739-5211LOCHNESS>

£: from £45

STIRLING CASTLE AND LOCH LOMOND SMALL GROUP DAY TRIP FROM EDINBURGH

Travel to Stirling Castle and Loch Lomond in style on a small-group tour from Edinburgh. Stirling Castle was Scotland's most important medieval stronghold and is set high on a volcanic outcrop. There has been fortification on the rock since 1000 BC, as it guards the main route north into the Scottish Highlands. You have the option of visiting the castle to see some of the finest Renaissance architecture in Scotland. Leaving Stirling, you'll travel past Doune Castle, Callander and into the Trossachs, an area popularized by authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Daniel Defoe. After lunch you 'take the high road' or back-road to Loch Lomond, Scotland's largest lochs at over 22 miles long, your will travel through the protected lands of Scotland's first National Park. The route you take is along the eastern shores, a beautiful sheltered stretch of the loch with noble mountains dominated by Ben Lomond, one of the most climbed mountains in Scotland and our most southerly "Munro". You will have about 1.5 hours at Loch Lomond, to either join your guide for a walk to the viewpoint overlooking the loch or enjoy a wee dram of whisky in the hotel whilst taking in the views.

Hours: Departs 7.45am from Royal Mile. Return 8pm.

W: <https://www.viator.com/tours/Edinburgh/Stirling-Castle-and-Loch-Lomond-Small-Group-Day-Trip-from-Edinburgh/d739-225006>

£: from £36

WEST HIGHLAND LOCHS AND CASTLES SMALL GROUP DAY TRIP FROM EDINBURGH

Spend a day experiencing Scotland's majestic lochs and castles on this day trip to the western Scottish Highlands, whose dramatic scenery will amaze you. See the setting of Monty Python's 'Holy Grail' series at Doune Castle, discover the ruins of Kilchurn Castle, admire the grandeur Stirling Castle and enjoy views over Scotland's countless lakes, including serene Loch Lomond. Hear tales of old clan rivalries, heroic journeys and royal legacies from your guide throughout the day. Numbers are limited to 16 to ensure a more personalized experience.

Hours: Departs 8.15am from Central Edinburgh. Duration: 10 hours

W: <https://www.viator.com/tours/Edinburgh/West-Highland-Lochs-and-Castles-Small-Group-Day-Trip-from-Edinburgh/d739-225003>

£: from £41

FULL DAY TRIP TO LOCH NESS AND THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

Explore Loch Ness, Glencoe and the Scottish Highlands on this 12-hour tour from Edinburgh. Depart from Edinburgh by air-conditioned minivan and travel out into the Scottish Highlands to Glencoe with your guide. Stop at Fort Augustus on the banks of Loch Ness at marvel at the spectacular scenery, then continue on to explore the Cairngorms National Park. Admire the majestic mountain of Craig Meagaidh and continue through the Drummochter mountain pass to visit the Victorian town of Pitlochry. Group size limited to 16 to ensure a personalized experience.

Hours: Departs 8.00am from Central Edinburgh. Duration: 12 hours

W: <https://www.viator.com/tours/Edinburgh/Loch-Ness-Glencoe-and-the-Highlands-Small-Group-Day-Trip-from-Edinburgh/d739-225005>

£: from 45

WALKS AROUND EDINBURGH

Arthur's Seat

The rocky peak of Arthur's Seat (251m), carved by ice sheets from the deeply eroded stump of a long-extinct volcano, is a distinctive feature of Edinburgh's skyline. The view from the summit is well worth the walk, extending from the Forth Bridges in the west to the distant conical hill of North Berwick Law in the east, with the Ochil Hills and the Highlands on the northwestern horizon. You can hike from Holyrood or Pollock Halls to the summit in around 45 minutes.

Bus: 6, 35

Calton Hill and Old Calton Burial Ground, Waterloo Place. Open 8am-dusk

One of Edinburgh's many atmospheric old cemeteries, Old Calton is dominated by the tall black obelisk of the Political Martyrs' Monument, which commemorates those who suffered in the fight for electoral reform in the 1790s. In the southern corner is the massive cylindrical grey stone tomb of David Hume (1711–76), Scotland's most famous philosopher. A walk up Calton Hill provides an opportunity to view Edinburgh at its best at sunset.

Bus: 15, 26, 44

Cramond

Enjoy walking along the river to the ruined mills and stroll along the seafront. With its moored yachts, stately swans and whitewashed houses spilling down the hillside at the mouth of the River Almond, Cramond is the most picturesque corner of Edinburgh. It is also rich in history. The Romans built a fort here in the 2nd century AD, but recent archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of a Bronze Age settlement dating from 8500 BC, the oldest-known site in Scotland. It's 5 miles northwest of the city centre; take bus 41 from George St (westbound) or Queensferry St.

Bus: 41

SCOTTISH HILLWALKING

Fife Coastal path is a quick train ride from Edinburgh on the Fife Circle line. Stage 2 of the route starts in North Queensferry, with other stages taking you round the 183km of the Fife Coast, linking golden beaches, woodland and Scotland's most picturesque former fishing villages as well as the home of golf - St Andrews with its ancient University.

<http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/fife-stirling/fife-coastal-path.shtml>

Corrie Fee is a national nature reserve at the head of Glen Clova in the Angus Glens of Scotland, within the Cairngorms National Park. Sculpted thousands of years ago by ice which left behind corries, cliffs, moraines and a meandering river, Corrie Fee provides a breath-taking landscape and is a haven for scarce arctic-alpine plants, birds and animals. Corrie Fee's path is popular all year round with hill walkers and the crags are well known for winter climbing. Watch out for beautiful alpine flowers, rare mountain willows clinging to the crags, golden eagles and peregrines.

<http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/angus/corrie-fee.shtml>

The Southern Upland Way is a 212-mile (341 km) coast-to-coast walk in Scotland between Portpatrick in the west, and Cockburnspath in the east. It is the only official coast-to-coast long-distance route in Scotland from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the North Sea in the East. The route can be completed in 12 stages each taking between 4 and 12 hours to complete. The Southern Uplands make up the southernmost part of Scotland, just north of the border with England, and runs from south-west to north-east. The route passes through gentle rolling moorland with steeper, higher and more rugged terrain in the Galloway Hills and Tweedsmuir Hills.

<http://www.southernuplandway.gov.uk/>

The Great Glen Way stretches for 73 miles (117 km) from coast to coast across the Highlands, linking the main centres of Fort William and the regional capital of Inverness. The route can be completed in six stages which each take between 4 and 9 hours to complete.

The route follows the major natural faultline of the Great Glen. Most of the route keeps to lower levels and offers a good introduction to the Highlands. The Way runs along the complete lengths of Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and the forests above Loch Ness, as well as along the towpath of the Caledonian Canal, an engineering marvel built by Thomas Telford that links these lochs and creates a through route from the western seaboard to the Moray Firth.

<http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/great-glen-way.shtml>

GETTING AROUND

BUSES

Buses are the main form of public transport within Edinburgh. The largest operator is Lothian Buses (owned by the City of Edinburgh Council and the neighbouring councils, with dark red and white buses), First Bus also operates services mainly to/from outlying towns.

Lothian Day Tickets are £4.00 for an adult, Single journey tickets cost £1.50. If you will use more than 2 bus journeys in one day buy a day ticket on the first bus you use during the day. **Note that exact change is required for Lothian bus tickets.**

Be aware that Lothian Day Tickets are only valid on Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams. That might sound obvious, but it catches many out. There are two main bus companies in Edinburgh (Lothian and First), plus a few smaller ones. Lothian is by far the largest. The tickets are not interchangeable.

If staying for longer, the Lothian Buses "Ridacard" is worth considering (available from the Lothian Buses / Transport for Edinburgh enquiry offices on Waverley Bridge, Hanover Street and Dalkeith). Another option is the "Citysmart" card; this is a rechargeable, prepaid smart-card for adult single journeys on Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams. The Citysmart card saves having to find change, but offers no other saving over cash fares. The Citysmart card has replaced the books of 20 single tickets that were previously available. Ridacards, Citysmart and day tickets are valid on both Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, but not on trains or any other operator's buses. For more information on Lothian Buses see: <http://www.lothianbuses.com>

TOUR BUSES

There are 4 tourist buses; get all 4 leaflets as they all follow slightly different routes but between them cover the major tourist sites. Be aware that they don't start very early, around 9.30am, and the last bus is around 5pm in winter. It is worth buying a Royal Edinburgh ticket if you intend to go to the 3 'top' sites; this gives 48 hours unlimited travel on all 4 of these buses, and free entrance to the Castle, Royal Yacht and Holyrood House; you also get some small discounts.

If you just want an easy highlights overview of the city, there are several very similar bus tours that are all reasonably priced. All start from Waverley Bridge in the city centre (next to the main railway station), but passengers can also get on and off at many stops around the city centre.

TRAMS

The Edinburgh tram line operates between the city centre and the Airport (via Princes Street, Haymarket, Murrayfield Stadium, the Stenhouse area and the Gyle shopping centre). Tram fares are the same as on Lothian Buses; Ridacards and Lothian Buses day tickets are also valid on the Trams - but be sure to validate your Ridacard on a special reader before boarding the tram. There is a ticket machine at every tram stop which accepts coins or bank cards - not banknotes. See: <http://www.edinburghtrams.com>

TRAINS

Getting around the city by train is by far the fastest way from one side to the other, but is more expensive and probably of limited use to tourists. The main tourist journey would be the city centre to Dalmeny, which is at the end of the Forth Rail Bridge. Trains run over the bridge to North Queensferry.

Trains continue from Edinburgh suburban stations to other destinations in central Scotland.

CAR

If you are driving anywhere near central Edinburgh, bear in mind that finding a parking space can be nearly impossible. One reader (in September 2005) spent close to two hours looking for parking near Princes Street. Local people agree that the situation is ridiculous, and fines are strictly enforced. It is sensible to park outside the city centre and take a bus. The city centre multi-storey car parks in Castle Terrace and the St James Shopping Centre can often get completely full. A limited amount of metered parking is available on city centre streets, but it is expensive and non-payment results in a £60 fine (reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days).

There are now 5 Park and Ride car parks; namely at Hermiston, Ingliston, Straiton, Sheriffhall and Newcraighall. Park your car for free and spend £4.00 on a Dayticket and the city is yours! The Park and Ride at Ingliston is served by the Tram. The Park & Ride at Newcraighall is served by ScotRail local train services with slightly higher fares than Lothian Buses.

CYCLE

Edinburgh has an extensive network of cycle paths across the city, many of them segregated from other road traffic. All railway stations have bicycle racks.

Bicycles can be hired from Biketrax <http://www.biketrax.co.uk/>

FOOT

Walking around the City Centre is easy and often the best way to get around and avoid traffic jams! Be aware that Edinburgh is a hilly city and in winter there can be ice and snow. Bicycle Hire

MORE INFORMATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Visit Traveline Scotland for complete journey planning information for travel around Scotland: <http://www.travelinescotland.com/>