

EATING OUT IN EDINBURGH

AIZLE

If you're the sort who has trouble deciding what to eat, Aizle will do it for you (the name is an old Scots word for 'spark' or 'ember'). There's no menu, just a five-course dinner conjured from a monthly 'harvest' of the finest and freshest of local produce (listed on a blackboard), and presented beautifully – art on a plate.

Opening hours: 6-9.30pm Wed, Thu & Sun, 5-9.30pm Fri & Sat

W: aizle.co.uk

Bus: 14

A: 107-109 St Leonard's St

£: 5-course dinner £45

T: +44 131 662 9349

DOGS

One of the coolest tables in town, this bistro-style place uses cheaper cuts of meat and less well-known, more sustainable species of fish to create hearty, no-nonsense dishes such as devilled kidneys on toast; shredded lamb with skirlie (fried oatmeal and onion), pomegranate seeds and almonds; and beetroot and horseradish spelt risotto.

Opening hours: noon-2.30pm & 6-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-4pm & 6-10pm Sat & Sun

W: www.thedogsonline.co.uk

Bus: 23, 27

A: 110 Hanover St

£: mains lunch £6, dinner £9-22

T: +44 131 220 1208

GRAIN STORE

An atmospheric upstairs dining room on picturesque Victoria St, the Grain Store has a well-earned reputation for serving the finest Scottish produce, perfectly prepared – from wood pigeon with leek and hickory risotto, to seared monkfish with scallop ravioli and mustard beurre blanc. The three-course lunch for £16 is good value.

Opening hours: noon-2.30pm & 6-9.45pm Mon-Sat, 6pm-9.30pm Sun

W: www.grainstore-restaurant.co.uk

Bus: 2, 23, 27, 41, 42

A: 30 Victoria St

£: mains £20-32

T: +44 131 225 7635

ONDINE

Ondine is one of Edinburgh's finest seafood restaurants, with a menu based on sustainably sourced fish. Take a seat at the curved Oyster Bar and tuck into oysters Kilpatrick, smoked haddock chowder, lobster thermidor, a roast shellfish platter or just good old haddock and chips (with minted pea purée, just to keep things posh).

Opening hours: noon-3pm & 5.30-10pm Mon-Sat

W: www.ondinerestaurant.co.uk

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

A: 2 George IV Bridge

£: mains £17-40, 2-/3-course lunch £25/30

T: +44 131 226 1888

CANNONBALL RESTAURANT

The historic Cannonball House next to Edinburgh Castle's esplanade has been transformed into a sophisticated restaurant (and whisky bar) where the Contini family work their Italian magic on Scottish classics to produce dishes such as haggis balls with spiced pickled turnip and whisky marmalade, and lobster with wild garlic and lemon butter

Opening hours: noon-5pm & 5.30-10pm Tue-Sat

W: www.contini.com/contini-cannonball

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

A: 356 Castlehill, Royal Mile

£: mains £15-25

T: +44 131 225 1550

LOCANDA DE GUSTI

This bustling family bistro, loud with the buzz of conversation and the clink of glasses and cutlery, is no ordinary Italian, but a little corner of Naples complete with hearty Neapolitan home cooking by friendly head chef Rosario. The food ranges from light and tasty ravioli tossed with butter and sage, to delicious platters of grilled seafood.

Opening hours: 5.30-10pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-2.15pm Thu-Sat

W: www.locandadegusti.com

Bus: 2, 3, 4, 25, 33, 44

A: 102 Dalry Rd

£: mains £9-26

T: +44 131 346 8800

CASTLE TERRACE

It was little more than a year after opening in 2010 that Castle Terrace was awarded a Michelin star under chef-patron Dominic Jack. The menu is seasonal and applies sharply whetted Parisian skills to the finest of local produce, be it Ayrshire pork, Aberdeenshire lamb or Newhaven crab – even the cheese in the sauces is Scottish.

Opening hours: noon-2.15pm & 6.30-10pm Tue-Sat

W: www.castleterracerestaurant.com

A: 33-35 Castle Terrace

T: +44 131 229 1222

Bus: 2

£: 3-course lunch/dinner £29.50/65

THE KITCHIN

Fresh, seasonal, locally sourced Scottish produce is the philosophy that has won a Michelin star for this elegant but unpretentious restaurant. The menu moves with the seasons, of course, so expect fresh salads in summer and game in winter, and shellfish dishes such as baked scallops with white wine, vermouth and herb sauce when there's an 'r' in the month.

Opening hours: 12.15-2.30pm & 6.30-10pm Tue-Thu, to 10.30pm Fri & Sat

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

A: 78 Commercial Quay

T: +44 131 555 1755

Bus: 16, 22, 35, 36

£: 3-course lunch/dinner £30/70

LOUDON'S CAFÉ & BAKERY

A cafe that bakes its own organic bread and cakes on the premises, ethically sourced coffee, daily and weekend newspapers scattered about, even some outdoor tables – what's not to like? All-day brunch (8am to 3pm) served at weekends includes eggs Benedict, warm spiced quinoa with dried fruit, and specials such as blueberry pancakes with fruit salad.

Opening hours: 8am-5pm

W: www.loudons-cafe.co.uk

A: 94b Fountainbridge

Bus: 1, 34, 35

£: mains £5-10

MUMS

This nostalgia-fuelled cafe serves up classic British comfort food that wouldn't look out of place on a 1950s menu – bacon and eggs, bangers and mash, shepherd's pie, fish and chips. But there's a twist – the food is all top-quality nosh freshly prepared from local produce. There's also a good selection of bottled craft beers and Scottish-brewed cider.

Opening hours: 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun

W: www.monstermashcafe.co.uk

A: 4a Forrest Rd

T: +44 131 260 9806

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

£: mains £8-11

MARTIN WISHART

In 2001 this restaurant became the first in Edinburgh to win a Michelin star, and has retained it ever since. The eponymous chef has worked with Albert Roux, Marco Pierre White and Nick Nairn, and brings a modern French approach to the best Scottish produce, from langoustines with kohlrabi, vanilla and passionfruit, to a six-course vegetarian tasting menu.

Opening hours: noon-2pm & 7-10pm Tue-Fri, noon-1.30pm & 7-10pm Sat

W: www.martin-wishart.co.uk

A: 54 The Shore

T: +44 131 553 3557

Bus: 16, 22, 35, 36

£: 3-course lunch/dinner £29/75

MIMI'S BAKEHOUSE

Mimi's Bakehouse is fresh out the oven, first opening the doors in November 2010 but the concept has been baking for generations. Mimi's Daughter Gemma is now the fourth generation of bakers in the family and the passion shows no sign of slowing down. An old and bashed book sits in a secret location bursting with clippings and guarded family recipes, its pages learnt cover to cover but its contents still treasured. Mimi's is a family business and their passion creates the warmth they hope you feel when you visit!

Opening hours: 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat-Sun

W: www.mimisbakehouse.com

A: 250 Canongate

T: +44 131 556 6632

Bus: 16, 22, 35, 36

£: mains from £5

GARDENER'S COTTAGE

This country cottage in the heart of the city, bedecked with flowers and fairy lights, offers one of Edinburgh's most interesting dining experiences – two tiny rooms with communal tables made of salvaged timber, and a menu based on fresh local produce (most of the vegetables and fruit are grown in a local organic garden). Booking essential; brunch served at weekends.

Opening hours: noon-2pm & 5-10pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10am-2pm & 5-10pm Sat & Sun

W: www.thegardenerscottage.co

Bus: all London Rd buses

A: 1 Royal Terrace Gardens, London Rd

£: lunch mains £16-17, dinner set menu £40

T: +44 131 558 1221

FIRST COAST

This popular neighbourhood bistro has a striking main dining area with sea-blue wood panelling and stripped stonework, and a short and simple menu offering hearty comfort food such as fish with creamy mash, brown shrimp and garlic butter, or leek and bread pudding, creamed leeks and braised fennel. Lunchtime and early evening there's an excellent two-course meal for £12.50.

Opening hours: noon-2pm & 5-11pm Mon-Sat

W: www.first-coast.co.uk

Bus: 2, 3, 4, 25, 33, 44

A: 97-101 Dalry Rd

£: mains £12-20

T: +44 131 313 4404

TIMBERYARD

Ancient worn floorboards, cast-iron pillars, exposed joists, and tables made from slabs of old mahogany create a rustic, retro atmosphere in this slow-food restaurant where the accent is on locally sourced produce from artisan growers and foragers. Typical dishes include seared scallop with apple, Jerusalem artichoke and sorrel; and juniper-smoked pigeon with wild garlic flowers and beetroot.

Opening hours: noon-2pm & 5.30-9.30pm Tue-Sat

W: www.timberyard.co

Bus: 2, 35

A: 10 Lady Lawson St

£: 4-course lunch or dinner £55

T: +44 131 221 1222

TOWERS RESTAURANT

Views of Edinburgh's castle and the spectacular skyline of Edinburgh's Royal Mile and Old Town feature on the menu of James Thomson's rooftop Tower Restaurant above Edinburgh's National Museum of Scotland. Fresh, locally sourced and impeccably cooked food, from an inventive menu, deft service and inspirational wines in a chic and glamorous rooftop setting are Tower trademarks. This is rooftop dining at its most spectacular - with brunch, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner every day.

Opening hours: all day, every day from 10am until 11pm (last reservation)

W: www.tower-restaurant.com/

Bus: 23, 27, 41, 42

A: National Museum of Scotland, Chambers St

£: 2 courses for £18.95 or 3 courses for £26

T: +44 131 225 3003

RHUBARB

Set in the splendid 17th-century Prestonfield hotel, Rhubarb is a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds. The over-the-top decor of rich reds set off with black and gold and the sensuous surfaces – damask, brocade, marble, gilded leather – that make you want to touch everything are matched by the intense flavours and rich textures of the modern Scottish cuisine.

Take your postprandial coffee and brandy upstairs to the sumptuous fireside sofas in the Tapestry and Leather rooms. A two-course lunch menu is available for £20.

Opening hours: noon-2pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-3pm Sun, 6-10pm daily

W: www.prestonfield.com/dine/rhubarb

Bus: n/a. Taxi/car essential

A: Prestonfield, Priestfield Rd

£: mains £18-35

T: +44 131 225 1333