



Travelexonline **Scotland's Capital Tour**

**Our Edinburgh tour will give you a small taste of centuries of history and architecture
in and around Scotland's Capital**

Edinburgh Castle

The Castle's story is that of Scotland. 'The stronghold of Eidyn' was first recorded before 600AD and by the Middle Ages it had become a mighty fortification and the royal residence of Scotland's kings and queens. Since the Bronze Age it has witnessed much of the nation's rich past including the birth of Mary Queen of Scots' only child - James VI, who united the crowns of Scotland and England - to Cromwell's Roundheads and the Jacobite Risings.

After the Tower of London, Edinburgh Castle is the next most visited ancient monument in Britain. From the battlements of the castle, views over Scotland's Capital are breathtaking. Inside the walls is a remarkable fortress and former Royal residence, packed with history. Remember also that though the castle is a historic monument, it is also a working military establishment. The Scottish Division is headquartered here and has a military guard on the main gate.

It was natural that a fort should be built on such a commanding and defensible site. We know that the fort was made of stone during the reign of Malcolm III (1058 to 1093). Edward I of England, in his efforts to conquer Scotland, took Edinburgh Castle in 1296, but in 1314 the Earl of Moray took the castle back for Scotland in a daring commando raid with only 30 men. The English took it back in 1335, but in 1341 Sir William Douglas again removed the invaders. He tricked the garrison into thinking his band of men were merchants, they seized the castle and decapitated most of the English garrison. The castle would now remain in Scottish hands until the Union of the Crowns in 1603. Attempts to take it were unsuccessful. In 1400 Henry V of England besieged the castle but had to withdraw to deal with a rebellion in Wales by Owen Glendower. In 1440 Edinburgh Castle was the site of the infamous "Black Bull's Dinner" where 16 year old sixth Earl of Douglas and his 14 year old brother David were murdered in front of their 10 year old King (James II). The death of Douglas was carried out by the ambitious Chancellor Crichton and was intended to break the Douglas power. The castle was further strengthened in 1573 and held out against an attack by the Covenanters in 1640, by Cromwell in 1650 and by the army of William and Mary in 1689. It continued to be strengthened and during Jacobite rising in 1745. Bonnie Prince Charlie's lacklustre efforts to take the castle were the last time that the castle came under attack.

Today Within the confines of the Castle, there is much to see. The historical apartments include the Great Hall, which now houses an interesting collection of weapons and armour.

The Royal apartments include a tiny room in which Mary, Queen of Scots gave birth to the boy who was to become King James VI of Scotland and James I of England upon the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. The ancient Honours of Scotland - the Crown, the Sceptre and the Sword of State - are on view in the Crown Room. Nearby is the Scottish National War Memorial, a building designed and created shortly after the First World War; many who enter find the experience a moving one.

Edinburgh Castle is also the home of the One O'clock Gun. This is fired every day except Sunday at precisely 1.00pm to provide everyone with an accurate check for their clocks and watches. It will certainly startle you if you are anywhere near the Castle at that moment! The Castle Esplanade is the venue of the world-famous Edinburgh Military Tattoo, the annual occasion on which, over a period of three weeks in August, the Army presents a lively programme of music, marching and historical re-enactments under floodlights before large and appreciative audiences.

The Royal Mile

The High Kirk of Edinburgh, St. Giles' Cathedral, is generally regarded as the mother church of Presbyterianism. The Cathedral was officially consecrated by the Bishop of St. Andrews in 1243; however its four massive central pillars date back to approximately 1120. The 'kerk werk'(old dialect for 'construction')of St. Giles was largely funded by Merchant Guilds, ship-dues and fines. The church was named after St. Giles, a saint popular throughout France, in support of the Auld Alliance of Scotland and France against England; their common and much hated enemy. After the Reformation, John Knox became St. Giles' first minister.

The Tron Kirk stands at the junction of North Bridge and The Royal Mile. It has been witness to many a Hogmanay celebration at the Tron, traditionally the gathering place of Edinburgh folk at New Year. Over the last few years' considerable work has been undertaken on the interior, excavating the cellar and discovering the ruins of ancient Edinburgh. It is now open as a visitor's centre where you can view the work to date, explained with pictures of before and after the work started.

Calvin had began the Reformation of Geneva at the time John Knox (1505-1572) was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland. When Knox's close friend George Wiseheart was burned at the stake by Cardinal Beaton he swore himself an enemy of the Roman Catholic Church. Two years later, Beaton was assassinated by "parties unknown."

After arriving in Edinburgh Knox soon had a growing group of followers. He travelled to Geneva three times to study under Calvin who had a high regard for the young Scotsman. Knox bore a terrible hatred toward Mary Queen of Scots' mother, Mary of Guise, and yet they met and in the meeting Mary tried converting Knox back to Roman Catholicism with bribes of political power.

From its humble beginnings as a small chapel on the Castle Rock, Holyrood House has played host to a tumultuous history of royalty and grandeur, horrific murders, and religious significance. Lurking at the bottom of the Royal Mile, it serves as a reminder of Scotland's volatile history. Famous incidents include the murder of the secretary of Mary Queen of Scots. The Augustinian Abbey was commissioned by Queen Margaret in approximately 1153. In 1768 it was partially destroyed by a hurricane, leaving the ruin that we see today. The Palace of Holyrood house, today the official Scottish residence of Britain's Royal Family, was built as a guest house for royal visitors. The Palace and the Abbey have survived numerous fires, repairs and restorations.

Holyrood Park/ Arthur Seat

To the east of the Castle, the large hill, which resembles a crouching lion, is Arthur's Seat, situated within Holyrood Park. Arthur's Seat is an extinct volcano - the largest of a number that gave this region its shape. Holyrood Park, extending to about 650 acres, must be the largest area of charmingly unmanicured wildscape at the centre of any European city. This satellite image shows the City of Edinburgh, surrounding the park, which is the lime-green area on the right of the image. Holyrood Park is also known as the Queen's Park, because it is owned by the monarch, although almost always open for the public to enjoy. It is well worth a visit; although entirely surrounded by the city, the park offers solitude and stimulating walking, (you can also drive most

of the way) The park contains the dramatic Salisbury Crags and three lochs, the largest of which is Duddingston Loch, a bird sanctuary, together with Dunsapie Loch and St. Margaret's Loch. Only Duddingston is natural; the others were artificially created in the middle of the 19th Century, following a plan drawn up by Prince Albert to make the park more accessible, which also included laying out the roads which we see today.

The park also contains evidence of several iron-age forts and farm-steads, together with well-preserved cultivation terraces. In 1832, the Holyrood Park was seriously considered as the site of a grand garden-cemetery, although this was never built. The entire park is now protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Calton Hill

Calton Hill is one of Edinburgh's main hills, set right in the city centre. It is unmistakable with its Athenian acropolis poking above the skyline.

The acropolis is in fact an unfinished monument - originally called the "National Monument". Initiated in 1816, a year after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, it was meant to be a replica of the Parthenon in Athens, as a memorial to those who had died in the Napoleonic Wars.

Building began in 1822, but funds ran dry and celebrated Edinburgh architect William Playfair only got to see a facade of his building completed. It was dubbed "Edinburgh's disgrace, but it's now a popular landmark and it's a lot of fun crawling up and down its giant steps. Plans since to complete the building never really get much support. The top of Calton hill is an excellent and usually quiet place to come on any day, with its grassy slopes and panoramic views of the city, including down the length of Princes street (one of the most famous streets in the world) and Edinburgh castle. There are excellent views of Salisbury Crags and the undulating slopes of Holyrood Park. Calton Hill is easily accessed. It takes about five minutes to get to the top of the hill from a steepish staircase at Waterloo Place, or we can drive up and park. There is a path right round the edge of the hill and there is a jumble of historic buildings and structures on top including, for star gazers, an observatory. In fact, there are two observatories on Calton Hill: the Old Observatory designed by New Town architect James Craig in 1792; and the City Observatory, built in 1818, which has exhibitions and viewings of the night sky.]

Greyfriars Bobby

In 1858, a Gentleman by the name of John Gray was buried in old Greyfriars Churchyard. His grave levelled by the hand of time, and unmarked by any stone, became scarcely discernible; but, although no human interest seemed to attach to it.

The sacred spot was not wholly disregarded or forgotten. For fourteen years the dead man's faithful dog kept constant watch and guard over the grave until his own death in 1872.

The famous Skye terrier, Greyfriars Bobby was so devoted to his master John Gray, even in death, for fourteen years Bobby lay on the grave only leaving for food. It is reported that a daily occurrence of people from all walks of life would stand at the entrance of the Kirkyard waiting for the one o'clock gun and the appearance of Bobby leaving the grave for his mid day meal.

Royal Yacht Britannia

The Royal Yacht Britannia is one of the world's most famous ships. She was launched from John Brown's Shipyard in Clydebank in 1953, the Royal Yacht proudly served Queen and country for forty-four years. During this time Britannia carried The Queen and the Royal Family on 968 official

voyages, covering most of the world's oceans. At the beginning of January 1997, Britannia set sail from Portsmouth to Hong Kong on her last and longest voyage. On 11 December 1997 Britannia was decommissioned at Portsmouth Naval Base in the presence of The Queen, The Duke of Edinburgh and fourteen of the most senior members of The Royal Family.

Four months later, after intense competition from cities around the UK, the Government announced that Edinburgh was successful in its bid to become Britannia's new home. She is now owned by The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, a charitable organisation whose sole remit is the maintenance of Britannia in keeping with her former role. Britannia is now permanently moored in Edinburgh's historic port of Leith and visitors can step on board the ship that was once home to the world's most famous family.

This is a half day tour consisting of approximately five hours; the cost excluding any entry fees would be £180.00 up to a maximum of eight persons.