



Welcome to Edinburgh, Scotland's Inspiring Capital.

No matter how high your expectations are, Edinburgh will surpass them. It really is one of Europe's most stunning and vibrant cities. But with such a wealth of attractions and activities on offer, it can seem a little daunting to decide what to see first.

At Apex, we thought this Edinburgh City Guide might just help. So here's our suggestions for what to do in your 24 hours here in Edinburgh.

Assuming you're an early bird and you're fuelled to go from your full Scottish breakfast, why not take a morning stroll up the busy Royal Mile to visit what has to be Edinburgh's most recognisable attraction and certainly, the most visible.

Edinburgh Castle is steeped in history, from its origins centuries ago, it has become an iconic symbol of Edinburgh's skyline and is the most visited attraction in the city. However, it's a lot more than bricks and mortar. Make sure you see St Margaret's Chapel, the Great Hall, the giant cannon - Mons Meg, the stone of destiny and the Honours of Scotland - the Scottish crown jewels. With such a vast array of treasures, you'll want to allow a good couple of hours for your visit. Because it attracts crowds, we'd recommend you get there early to enjoy a quieter tour.



More Information – Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Castle is open from 9:30 to 6pm during the Summer (that's the 1st of April to the 30th of September) and from 9:30 to 5pm during the Winter (1st October – 31st March) Expect to pay around £12 for an adult ticket and £6 for a child's ticket.

Concessions are available. For more information visit

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

Once you've finished exploring all that the Castle has to offer, why not enjoy a mid morning coffee in one of the many cafes nearby.

As you walk down the Royal Mile, take particular notice of the alleys to your left and right. You're in Edinburgh's Old Town and the names of these "closes", as these alleys are called in Scotland, certainly conjure up images of what Edinburgh must have been like centuries ago.

About half way down the Royal Mile, on your left, you'll see The Real Mary Kings Close. Not for the faint hearted, this journey beneath Edinburgh, takes you along original 16th and 17th century streets. Previously inaccessible, they chart the history of Edinburgh's population. Learn how the people of Edinburgh lived, worked and died in the 16th and 17th centuries and walk in their footsteps, if you dare. Please be aware, this attraction has steep steps down into the close itself, so may not be suitable for some visitors.

More Information – The Real Mary Kings Close

The Real Mary Kings Close's opening times can be found on their website www.realmarykingsclose.com or by calling 08702 430160, with ticket prices starting at around £10 for an adult ticket, £6 for children aged 5-15 and £9 for senior citizens. For health and safety reasons they don't accept push chairs or children under 5 years of age.

For the really brave, opposite The Real Mary Kings Close, is the Mercat Cross, where the majority of the now infamous Edinburgh Ghost Tours commence. Will you dare to venture beneath the streets of Edinburgh into the darkly entertaining Edinburgh Vaults? A truer test of nerve has never there been!

More Information – Mercat Tours

These tours are usually scheduled for late afternoon to evening, visit www.mercattours.com for more information, or call 0131 225 5445.

Work your way down to the other end of the Royal Mile to visit another of Edinburgh's famous buildings, The Palace of Holyrood. This is the Queen's official residence in Edinburgh and its history stretches back nearly 9 centuries. According to legend, David I founded the palace as an Augustinian monastery in 1128. It has since been the home of many a King and Queen and today, you can experience the Palace and the ruined Holyrood Abbey almost all year round.



Discover how the other half live, explore the Royal apartments, and marvel at the grandeur of one of Edinburgh's finest architectural examples.

Afterwards, enjoy a spot of lunch at the courtyard café, an ideal place to rest your legs before an afternoon of adventuring.

After lunch, you may want to pop across the road to see the Scottish Parliament building which is in stark contrast to the traditional architecture of Holyrood Palace. This impressive, modern building is home to an exhibition about the Parliament in Scotland and also offers you the opportunity to see the MSP's in action. It really is well worth a visit to find out more about Scottish politics.

Alternatively, why not head to Dynamic Earth, a science centre with a difference. Opened in 1999 it traces the evolution of the Earth through exhibitions that tingle senses and excite minds. Perfect for children and the child within us all.

More Information – Dynamic Earth

Dynamic Earth is open all year round, with adult tickets priced at around £9.50 and children at £5.95. Visit www.dynamicearth.co.uk for more information, or call 0131 550 7800.

After exploring, why not finish your day off with dinner in Heights restaurant at the Apex International Hotel? With such an impressive view of Edinburgh Castle, as well as double AA rosette winning cuisine, it serves as a fitting end to your 24 hours in Edinburgh.



More Information – Heights Restaurant

Heights Restaurant is open Monday to Saturday, 7 – 9:45pm. For more information on Heights, including menus, please visit <http://www.apexhotels.co.uk/hotels/edinburgh-international/eat-and-drink/heights-restaurant/>

Apex Hotels look forward to welcoming you to Edinburgh.