

Forever
Edinburgh

The Official Guide to Edinburgh

Accessible Edinburgh

A guide to the city's highlights for disabled visitors and residents

GUIDE

In association with

EUAN'S



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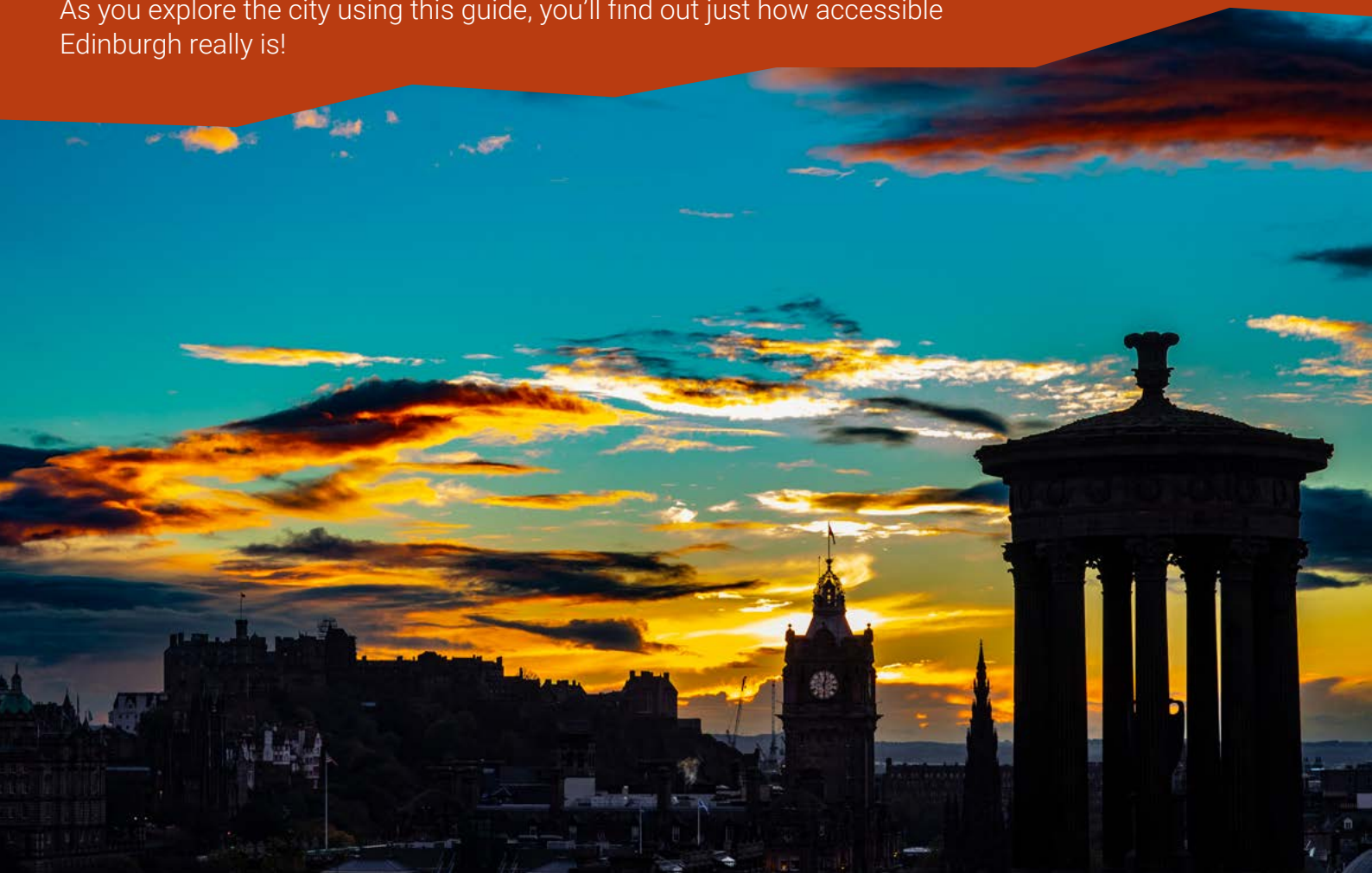
Images: VisitScotland/Peter Dibdin

Welcome to Edinburgh!

As you step into Scotland's captivating capital, you're greeted by a city steeped in history, culture, and charm. From the majestic Edinburgh Castle perched atop Castle Rock to the bustling streets of the Royal Mile, and Edinburgh's eleven, entirely different neighbourhoods, there's something for everyone.

In this guide, you'll discover the wonders of Edinburgh, whether you're here for a short visit or a longer stay. From iconic landmarks and world-class museums to picturesque parks and vibrant festivals, there's no shortage of experiences to enjoy.

As you explore the city using this guide, you'll find out just how accessible Edinburgh really is!



Introduction

Edinburgh is a historical city, which you'd think would make it inaccessible - but it's actually got lots of great places for disabled people. As a powerchair user, my brother and co-founder of Euan's Guide, Euan knew only too well how a city as old as our hometown can conjure images of trapping a wheel or becoming stuck on an incline.

However, we're delighted share with you all of the ways Edinburgh can be easily enjoyed once you know how. Inside this guide, we hope to show you how much Edinburgh has to offer disabled visitors. These are flavours of the city, not recipes to follow, and we hope that you'll take from these pages the parts that sound the most exciting to you and go on to enjoy time exploring Edinburgh. If there's

anything else you need, please let us know. We hope you will love Edinburgh as much as we do!

Kiki MacDonald

*Co-founder of Euan's Guide,
and the Euan's Guide team*

Edinburgh, it's more accessible than you think

The Scottish capital is a city for the senses, and you'd be amazed at how much you can do in a day in 'Auld Reekie'. It's compact enough that you can experience both sides of the UNESCO World Heritage Site – the Old and New Towns – in a short visit, yet there's so much to do that you'll never get tired of exploring it.

Enjoy the contrast of city life with the calm of its big parks, gurgling Water of Leith and the lulling waves at the shoreline. Edinburgh has an excellent back garden. When you're ready to dive back into the closes, alleyways, streets and bustle of the city, listen out for the 'ding ding' of the accessible trams scooting past and the one o'clock gun reminding everyone to grab a bite for lunch.

The multi-sensory experience doesn't stop there. You'll likely catch a whiff of a brewery or an inhale

of whisky, or that wonderful new book smell in the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. Then there's the coffee roasters, the irresistible aromas from street food vendors or the smell of fish 'n' chips at Portobello beach. And, in the south of the city, you'll hear the murmur of students working away in cafes, mingled with the excitement of tourists who are seeing it all for the first time.

The best bit is, you can enjoy all this with the comfort of knowing that Edinburgh is becoming more accessible every day. With more Changing Places facilities popping up than ever before and great wheelchair friendly transport options, there's a lot to get excited about. And that's not to mention all the BSL interpreted tours, relaxed experiences, audio described events and accessible accommodation there is to find in and around the city.

Neighbourhoods

Edinburgh is divided into eleven areas, each one being completely unique with fantastic experiences to offer. Whatever you're looking for, Edinburgh's neighbourhoods have something for everyone!



Old Town

It's true that wheeling and walking around the capital's oldest streets may seem daunting at first, but you'd be surprised at all the ways you can explore the enchanted maze of the Old Town! The World Heritage site with its layers upon layers of medieval skyscrapers is staggering. Sloping from Edinburgh Castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse is the **Royal Mile** where you can shop for souvenirs and Scottish gifts to the soundtrack of bagpipes and ghost stories. And if you visit in August, you'll find yourself swept up in the lively atmosphere of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with vibrant street performances and bustling crowds adding to the excitement.

As the night falls, the Cowgate comes alive with the sounds of toe-tapping live music, attracting everyone from students and backpackers to locals and tourists. By morning, the last party-goers have gone to bed and **Grassmarket** invites early risers to browse their weekly food stalls and independent and vintage shops, all while treating yourself to some of the most breathtaking views of the castle.



Quick Tip!

See more of the Old Town with a bus tour. Both Edinburgh Bus Tours and Bright Bus Tours have tours which take in the historic city centre. All tours buses have ramped access and two rear-facing wheelchair accessible spaces. Multi-language audio guides can be listened to through headphones provided.

New Town



With fewer hills and more accessible public transport, **New Town** is a splendid place to explore when you fancy a less energetic day out, and perhaps a cheeky cocktail or two.

New Town offers a delightful contrast to the Old Town, with its grid layout and classic Georgian architecture. You can simply enjoy the peace of leafy Princes Street Gardens with its gothic monument and admire the postcard view of the Old Town skyline. On a rainy day, there's nothing better than wandering around the National Gallery or the Portrait Gallery and tucking into a tasty scone afterwards. If shopping is on your agenda, you'll be spoiled for choice and the St James Quarter is a good place to start. During November and December, New Town transforms into a winter wonderland with thousands of woolly hatted visitors warming up at the Christmas market or braving the ice rink. If you'd prefer to enjoy the festivities indoors, New Town's selection of cosy restaurants and bars both familiar and independent is hard to beat.



Quick Tip!

Another perk of New Town is the increasing accessibility, with more Changing Places facilities popping up across the area. You'll find them in Edinburgh Waverley train station – networkrail.co.uk/communities/passengers/our-stations/edinburgh-waverley, the St James Quarter, the National Galleries, the Johnnie Walker Princes Street and in The Booking Office pub on Waverley Bridge.

West End and Haymarket

The **West End** knows how to put on a good show. Whether it's an accessible performance at one of its many theatres or a modern whisky experience where you can almost forget about accessibility entirely, you're in for a treat.

The West End is where the grid system of New Town fades away and the higgledy piggledy streets of Old Town start to get a little more organised. It's where audiences spill out of theatres and concert halls into the bars and restaurants of Lothian Road.

A true blend of old and new, some parts of the West End are cobbled and a little trickier to wheel over. However, Lothian Road is smooth and flat with bus stops and a taxi rank right outside the main theatre venues.



Quick Tip!

Whisky enthusiasts should not miss a visit to Johnnie Walker Princes Street. After touring the exhibition areas, take a trip to their two rooftop bars for stunning city views. The building has eight floors, all connected by lifts and stairs, an accessible toilet on each floor and a Changing Places toilet on the ground floor.

Stockbridge



A small neighbourhood built around the gurgling Water of Leith, Stockbridge is one of those places where you'll rarely want to put your camera down.

Wheeling or walking to **Stockbridge** may take a little gusto as it's a fairly steep 15 minutes' walk downhill from Princes Street. However, there are frequent buses to Raeburn Place that will get you where you need to go. It's worth noting that there are a good number of basement bars in Stockbridge, so you might want to plan ahead if you'd like to grab a bite to eat.



Quick Tip!

If you're visiting on a Sunday, you're in for a treat with the weekly market in full swing. After browsing through the stalls, why not go for a wander around the nearby Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, one of the leading botanic gardens in the world.

Portobello

Edinburgh's seaside with a high street of cafes and bars is a pleasant 30 minutes' bus ride from the city centre.

Portobello might be a tad cold most of the year, but it's a beach loved by locals. Wild swimmers enjoy nothing more than a dip in the chilly water, and the beach is popular with groups of friends enjoying a slice of pizza from the promenade. It's a great spot for sunsets and even a rare sighting of the northern lights (so it's been said). If you'd rather not get sandy, you can enjoy the sounds of the waves from the wide walkway along the waterfront. You might as well enjoy an ice cream while you're there!



Quick Tip!

Beach Wheelchairs hire all terrain power wheelchairs, which are perfect for wheeling across the sand. They can also provide manual beach wheelchairs for those who fancy a paddle.

Visit beachwheelchairs.org/portobello



Leith

This undeniably cool neighbourhood in the north of the city is a multicultural melting pot of different cafes and restaurants, with tiny sandwich bars serving (the best) paninis next door to world class Michelin eateries.

From the top of Leith Walk to the industrial waterfront by The Shore, **Leith** has many personalities. Look out for murals and street art, endless tenements, high rises and converted warehouses. Dip in and out of independent places on Leith Walk or give the parallel Easter Road a try for even more one-of-a-kind shops. When the football's on, expect to see jubilant fans with green scarves filling the streets. In Leith, royalty floats on water and whisky is distilled up high. Have a blether with a local 'Leither' if you can.

Books, second-hand typewriters, craft beers, model railways, antiques, vintage clothing and musical instruments – no matter what's on your shopping list, there's a strong chance you'll find it in Leith!



Quick Tip!

Walking or wheeling down Leith Walk is doable, but heading back towards the city centre might feel like a bit of a climb, so a trip on the tram helps. Running regularly between the airport and Newhaven, all trams have low entrances, high visibility handrails, two dedicated wheelchair spaces, disabled priority seats and passenger alert buttons signposted in Braille.

Southside

Leave the cobbled streets of Old Town behind for the lively **Southside**, a sociable neighbourhood with all the museums and culture you could hope for.

Southside, with its large student influence, moves with the times. Apart from a few long-standing favourites, the coffee shops and cafes change often, and the bars are usually stacked with boardgames and craft beer. In August, before students return for the new term, the university campus takes on a new life during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe as a village bursting with food stalls, seating and live acts.

Navigating Southside is a breeze, with smooth pavements dotted with a few cobblestone patches and slightly raised curbs to look out for. While it can get busy with traffic, fear not! The area has excellent links to the rest of the city.



Quick Tip!

There are some cycle paths perfect for wheeling along, away from the hustle and bustle of traffic.

Tollcross

With fewer attractions and more local haunts, **Tollcross** marks the intersection between several of Edinburgh's liveliest neighbourhoods. This would be a good place to stay if you're planning to explore the West End or Grassmarket, and Brooks Hotel Edinburgh, a rather accessible boutique B&B, is nearby.

Tollcross is popular thanks to the many independent shops and restaurants. It also has several sports shops hinting at its proximity to parks and the Union Canal. The canal has been designed with cyclists in mind, meaning it has excellent surfaces to wheel and walk over.



Quick Tip!

If you fancy a night at the cinema, Cameo Picturehouse screens a regularly changing programme of arthouse films. Your assistance dog is welcome, and certain performances are subtitled. Dementia Friendly screenings are held on the second Friday of each month.

Corstorphine

Home to everyone's favourite animal neighbours, **Corstorphine** is where you'll find Edinburgh Zoo.

Good bus links connect the city centre to Corstorphine with a stop right outside the entrance to Edinburgh Zoo. The zoo with a view isn't all this neighbourhood has to offer, you can also enjoy its many restaurants and bakeries. And, if you're a rugby fan, Scottish Gas Murrayfield Stadium is within walking and wheeling distance.



Quick Tip!

Edinburgh Zoo offer mobility aid hire and have a free mobility vehicle service. Sensory bags which include accessible maps, ear defenders sunglasses, fidget toys and binoculars are also available.



Gorgie and Dalry

If you're in the mood for a fun, playful day out with some cheap eats, **Gorgie** has you covered.

Football fans will likely find themselves in Gorgie, hopefully for a derby at Tynecastle Stadium between the city's two legendary teams: Hearts and Hibs. Afterwards, there's nothing else for it but to take your pick of the many international eateries and takeaways on **Dalry Road**. Make your way here by bus or taxi, or walk or wheel from the West End.



Bruntsfield and Morningside

A haven for families and students alike, the quaint neighbourhoods of **Bruntsfield and Morningside** are best explored during the daytime when greengrocers, shops and cafes throw open their doors.

Gentle inclines in Bruntsfield make way for a steeper dip into Morningside, but both neighbourhoods are easily reached by bus. This is arguably the brunch capital of Edinburgh with countless cafes inviting you inside for all kinds of breakfast treats. You can even collect some putters from the tavern by Bruntsfield Links to enjoy an impromptu round of golf, no experience necessary!



Quick Tip!

With its wide-open green spaces, the Meadows is a favourite park with both locals and visitors. For a burst of colour, pay a visit in the spring to see the pathways lined with glorious cherry blossom trees.

Festival City

Edinburgh is the greatest festival city in the world with annual festivals attracting millions of audience members each year. August is the time to go if you want to experience several festivals at once, otherwise you can visit at a quieter time of year to soak up some of the equally brilliant festivals in spring and winter.

Please note: Festival dates change each year. For exact months and dates, check edinburgh.org/festivals



Edinburgh Science Festival (March/April)

A hands-on, messy, magical fortnight in spring, the Edinburgh Science Festival hosts over a hundred events across the city. Around a third of the programme is free to attend and the website lists accessible events taking place.



Edinburgh International Children's Festival (May/June)

This fun-filled celebration of theatre and dance aimed at families takes place over several days in summer. The festival kicks-off with a day of free performances in the National Museum of Scotland. All performance spaces are easy to wheel into, good for not only wheelchair users but families who are bringing prams or buggies. There are various BSL interpreted and relaxed performances included in the programme.

Hidden Door Festival (May/June)

This pop-up festival takes art and music underground, into derelict buildings, forgotten courtyards and empty buildings. In the evening, grab tickets for a gig or late-night DJ and help bring old, forgotten spaces back to life. The festival can provide ear defenders and has quiet areas available for those who prefer a more relaxed setting. Not all nooks and crannies of these derelict venues will be safe or accessible to explore, but the festival does its very best to make routes easy to walk and wheel across.

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival (July)

Music of all varieties spilling out of tents, bars and concert halls can only mean one thing, the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival has returned! Groove along to performances at one of the largest jazz festivals in Europe and let the music take you to parts of the city you've never visited before. The friendly ticket office team will be on hand to answer questions about each venue's accessibility before you book.



Edinburgh International Book Festival (August)

A book village like no other springs up in the Old Town for two weeks every August. It's the world's largest book festival with hundreds of events including workshops and book signings. Book lover or not, this charming space is worth a wander. Many events are ticketed but the festival village is free to enter. The festival has a pop-up Changing Places toilet and good wheelchair access throughout. Look out for the selection of captioned and BSL interpreted events in the programme.



Edinburgh Art Festival (August)

The UK's largest festival of visual art takes place in galleries and museums around the city. Most of the festival events are free, and there are numerous visual description tours and workshops for visually impaired festival-goers to enjoy.



Did you know?

Did you know that the UK's largest festival of visual art takes place in galleries and museums around the city? Best part? A lot of the festival's events won't cost you a penny! Plus, they've got plenty of visual description tours and workshops tailored specifically for our visually impaired festival-goers to enjoy.

Edinburgh International Film Festival (August)

Fans of independent cinema will love this festival packed full of films and outdoor screenings, talks and events. The programme includes a good variety of audio described and captioned showings at various venues around the city. Low sensory screenings may benefit those who prefer a more relaxed viewing experience.



Edinburgh International Festival (August)

Edinburgh wouldn't be a festival city without the Edinburgh International Festival. This is where it all began and where audiences flock to every August to see the best in theatre, opera and dance. The festival has an Access Pass which helps audience members get the best experience to suit their requirements. This includes requesting different brochure formats and booking the best seating for your show.

Foodies Festival (August)

Stockbridge's Inverleith Park is home to the UK's largest touring food and drink festival, bringing a collection of mouth-watering culinary theatres to the park. Watch famous chefs work their magic or let the kids dabble in the kitchen at the Children's Cookery Theatre. This pop-up festival has accessible parking and toilets.



Edinburgh Festival Fringe (August)

It's the big one, the one with all the flyers and revelling, where street performers dazzle and delight, and where you can take your pick of hundreds upon hundreds of shows. Be prepared for lively streets, particularly in the Old Town. The festival has ear defenders for borrowing and excellent sensory backpacks which you can keep and take home. There's also team of staff dedicated to access ticket booking and enquiries.



The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo (August)

Nothing quite signals the start of the August festivals like the transformation of the Castle Esplanade into the stage for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. It's a spectacle like no other with all the bagpipes you could hope for and more. There are pop-up accessible toilets and a Changing Places facility on the Esplanade for the duration of the festival. For easier access to the entrance at the top of the Royal Mile, you can arrange an Accessible Vehicle Pass, which lets wheelchair users be dropped off as close as possible.

Scottish International Storytelling Festival

(October)

As the seasons change, there's nothing better than a good story and a gathering of friends. Bring your imagination and prepare to be captivated by storytellers and musicians at this magical storytelling festival in October. Most events take place in the Storytelling Centre on the Royal Mile which has good accessibility. The festival has a selection of relaxed, BSL interpreted and captioned performances to enjoy.



Edinburgh's Christmas

(November to January)

Few traditional Christmas markets have a backdrop like Edinburgh's. The city centre transforms into a winter wonderland with a big wheel that's accessible to manual wheelchair users, countless delicious food and drink stalls, chirpy festive music and funfair rides. At the ice rink, you can enjoy relaxed sessions,

and for the little ones, there are toddler skate sessions too. Sensory backpacks are available from information points if you'd enjoy a more sensory-friendly market experience. If a visit to Santa's Stories is on your list, you can choose from relaxed, audio described and BSL interpreted sessions.

Image: VisitScotland/Peter Dibdin



Edinburgh's Hogmanay (December/January)

Nobody does New Year's Eve quite like Edinburgh! Known as 'Hogmanay', the festivities begin with an atmospheric torchlight procession through the Old Town a few days before the bells. Then tens of thousands of party-goers line Princes Street for the world-famous Hogmanay Street Party. Keep warm by dancing along to

the music and get ready to countdown to the mesmerising Midnight Moment. An Accessible Viewing Platform with a dedicated entrance provides an excellent view of Edinburgh Castle and there are accessible toilets throughout the street party.



Getting around

Edinburgh's seven hills may seem intimidating at first, but once you figure out your way around, getting around the city is surprisingly easy!



Image: Edinburgh Trams

Edinburgh Airport

Edinburgh truly is an international city and, if you're flying in, you'll be happy to hear that the airport is only a short tram or 30 minutes' bus ride from the city centre. Being the first in the UK to introduce SignLive, an on-demand remote BSL interpretation service, they go the extra mile to make sure everyone feels included. And if you need a little extra help navigating through the airport, they've got a social story on their website to guide you through the gates, entrances and exits. Plus, there are plenty of accessible toilets scattered throughout the building, and you'll find a Changing Places facility near gate 16.

Edinburgh Trams

Running every seven minutes and each with two dedicated wheelchair accessible spaces, the trams have become locals' preferred option for accessible transport in Edinburgh. Connecting Edinburgh Airport to the city centre and north to Leith and the coastal neighbourhood of Newhaven, the trams are a handy way of travelling to some of the city's most popular sights. Buy your ticket before you board and look out for the wheelchair symbol on the ground at the tram stop. This indicates where to wait if you wish to board the accessible middle carriage, and the best bit is no ramps are required!



Quick Tip!

Unlike buses, it's not necessary to push the bell for the tram to stop. However, if you are seated in a wheelchair accessible space, look for the yellow button which you can ring to let the driver know you may need a little extra time to exit at the next stop.



Lothian Buses

You can simply tap a contactless device at the driver's window to travel on a Lothian Bus. Every vehicle in the fleet has at least one wheelchair accessible space which makes it easy to access all the parts of the city that the tram or rail stops don't reach. There is priority seating on board which leaves plenty of room for both you as a passenger and your assistance dog if you are travelling with one. Many of the buses have

visual and audio prompts for upcoming stops, but you can also download the Transport for Edinburgh (TFE) app to hear alerts to aid your journey. Just don't forget to press the bell when your stop is approaching!



Quick Tip!

You can switch on 'Stop Radar' to give you audible information about bus stops you are walking or wheeling towards, including the distance to the stop and which buses are due to arrive there.

Taxis

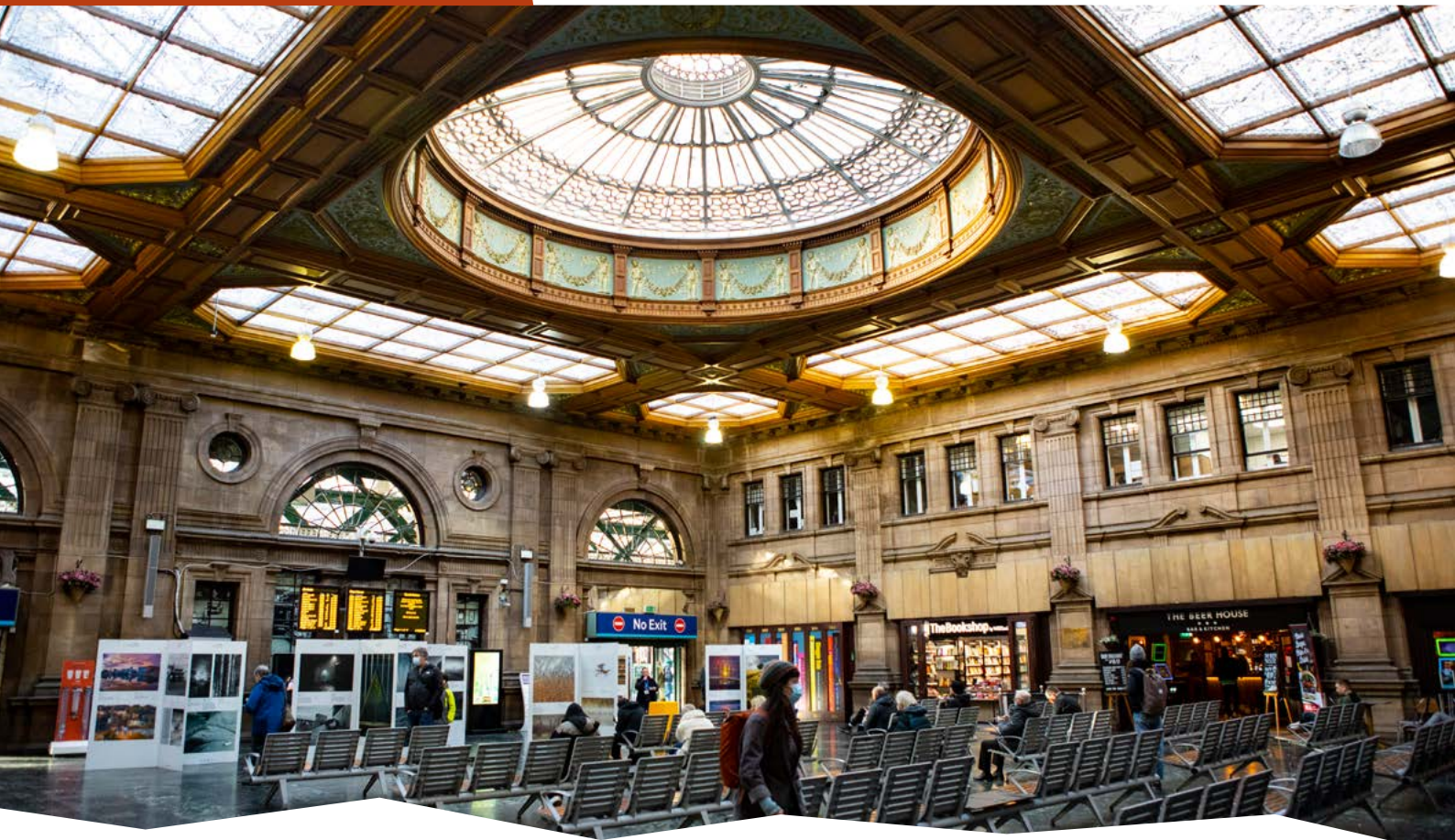
Edinburgh's two main black cab taxi firms together have over 900 taxis and every taxi in the fleet is wheelchair accessible. You can hail a taxi that has its yellow light on, use a taxi rank or, to feel more prepared, you can book a taxi in advance. The main firms are called City Cabs and Central Taxis.

Driving

If you choose to take your car into the city centre, be aware that Edinburgh has a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in place. Before you hit the road, make sure to check your vehicle is compliant before travelling. While many of the big hotels and shopping centres offer parking, if you're looking for Blue Badge spaces around the city, you can find an up-to-date map on the City of Edinburgh Council's website.



For more information on accessible transport options throughout the city see our Disabled Access page: edinburgh.org/disabledaccess



Train

Edinburgh's two main train stations, Haymarket and Waverley, connect the West and East Ends of the city centre, bypassing lots of busy roads. This means they're not just a good way to get to and from the city, but also a great option for travelling within the city too.

Edinburgh Waverley is a large glass-roofed station which has a Changing Places toilet and lifts and slopes leading to different city centre

exits. If you're getting picked up or dropped off at the station, the Calton Road drop-off point is the main accessible entrance and is much quieter and accessible by stairs or lift.

In the West End, Haymarket station is smaller and especially good for transferring to a tram. There is a tram stop ride outside the doors, unlike at Waverley where you must walk or wheel across a busy road to the nearest stop.

Edinburgh Bus Tours

Edinburgh's hop-on, hop-off buses are a practical way of getting around the city, whether you're visiting the stops on the route or not. It's a good idea to get a 24 or 48 hour ticket if you plan to cover different parts of the city during your visit. All of Edinburgh Bus Tours buses are wheelchair accessible, with 2 rear-facing wheelchair accessible spaces with their own display screens.



Walking, wheeling and cycling

In Edinburgh, you can make clever use of public transport to join the dots between any trickier sections that you don't like the look of as a pedestrian. The ascent from New Town to Old Town can be steep in places, but this can be easily overcome by crossing North Bridge rather than attempting the steep inclines up the sides of the Royal Mile. Join the bridge from the east end of Princes Street beside The Balmoral and

you can walk or wheel across the bridge to reach all the excitement of Old Town.

In the north of the city there's an entire network of disused railway lines which have been transformed into wide, flat paths among woodland and free from traffic. These are a great way of moving around different neighbourhoods without having to worry about crossing busy roads. If you are a bike user, the city has become more friendly to cyclists in recent years with new cycle lanes appearing alongside main roads.



Discover more

With our Cycling city guide
edinburgh.org/cyclingguide



Did you know?

Edinburgh is the first city in Scotland to enforce a pavement parking ban making it easier than ever to walk and wheel along its pavements. For more information, visit edinburgh.gov.uk/newparkingrules

Tours

Embark on an unforgettable journey through the heart of Scotland's capital city with some of these fantastic tours. Whether you're a history buff eager to uncover the secrets of Edinburgh Castle, a foodie craving a taste of the city's culinary delights.



Kneeling Buses

Edinburgh's tour buses are not only a great way to learn about the city, they're also one of the best options for accessible transport as they regularly take you directly to the entrance door, making access more convenient for all guests.

These brightly coloured hop-on, hop-off buses are an excellent way to get from A to B in Edinburgh. Every tour is wheelchair accessible as these are kneeling buses with ramped access. Many of the buses have two wheelchair accessible spaces with their own display screens. Whether you enjoy bus tours or not, it's well worth getting a 48 hour ticket to make the most of this accessible transport option.

**Quick Tip!**

Use the Transport for Edinburgh (TFE) app to plan your journey and access RNIB designed features for visually impaired travellers.



Old town stories

Disappear into closes and archways off the Royal Mile on one of these imaginative Old Town tours.

If you're after a good introduction to Edinburgh, a guided tour of the Royal Mile and its secrets is a great place to start. Mercat Tours have some of the best storytellers around and they will skilfully adapt their tours for everyone in the group. Whether it's taking a wheelchair accessible route, speaking clearly and slowly to aid lip-reading, or including more descriptions for visually impaired visitors, the storytellers' performances are flawless.

**Quick Tip!**

These tours are mostly outdoors and your guide can point out the nearest accessible toilets along the way.

**More tours to try**

Edinburgh has become a popular filming location, so look out for niche film tours if you're a movie buff. Foodies may enjoy a whisky or gin distillery tour, a few of which have some of the most innovative approaches to access in Edinburgh. If you love the theatre, there are pre-show touch tours listed on the websites of the city's best venues. For more suggestion on Edinburgh Tours, visit edinburgh.org/tours

History and architecture

From gothic spires and volcanic rock to Georgian townhouses and weather-beaten tenements, you'll be in awe of Edinburgh's dramatic blend of old and new. It's a well-aged city, with some very good stories to tell.





EDINBURGH CASTLE

A castle and its volcano

Ascend the Royal Mile to reach the top of Castle Rock, an extinct volcano, where Edinburgh Castle awaits.

The oldest parts of Edinburgh Castle were built in the 12th century, so it can be steep and tricky to access in places. But that certainly doesn't stop wheelchair or powerchair users from rambling around the stony fortress. The most useful tip for exploring the castle on wheels is to request use of the mobility vehicle at the castle entrance. This vehicle can take one wheelchair user plus three passengers at a time up the steep hill to Crown Square, a large open space with accessible toilets.

For visitors who would like to feel more prepared before visiting this busy attraction, there are visual stories available on the website. If ear defenders would be helpful, these can be requested at the entrance when you show your ticket. Plus, the castle's audio guide is available in print versions, including large print and Open Dyslexic. Pick one up at the audio booth beside the entrance – it's free of charge!



Quick Tip!

There are a handful of accessible parking spaces for Blue Badge holders on the Castle Esplanade.



Good to know

Be ready for the sudden, loud noise of the one o'clock gun which is fired daily from the castle. You might even smell the gunpowder afterwards!

CASTLE ESPLANADE

Where the Royal Mile meets the Castle

Home to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo and an open-air venue for concerts, the Esplanade is the city's main stage.

If you're planning to attend an event, be sure to book your wheelchair accessible tickets early to secure your spot. And don't forget to wrap up warm!

To experience the calm of the Esplanade and panoramic views of the city, we recommend visiting when the festivals aren't in full swing. During August, the space morphs into a bustling open-air stage, which can make access a bit tricky.



ST GILES' CATHEDRAL

The High Kirk

Near the midway point of the Royal Mile, this crown-spired kirk has been a working church for nearly 900 years.

Stone ramps lead you through an automatic door into the hushed, cool stone interior of St Giles' Cathedral. It's a quiet place for reflection, unless you're here to witness a spine-tingling cathedral concert. Admission is free and guided tours are available on request as are written guides. There aren't any public toilets inside, but there's an accessible toilet nearby on the ground floor, via a platform lift of the National Library of Scotland and a Changing Places toilet at the National Museum of Scotland.





ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA

An accessible royal yacht

Lose yourself in five decks of royal history on water, with a lift to every level.

This floating museum in Leith has made clever use of ramps and lifts to take visitors on a smooth journey below deck and through years of royal history. There's also a sizeable accessible toilet on board this historic vessel. Be sure to pick up the audio tour when you arrive, as this can also be enjoyed using British and American Sign Language tablets. The script has been printed

in Braille, and an audio handset with additional explanations of the yacht's layout makes the experience even more accessible.



Quick Tip!

Due to construction work at Ocean Terminal Shopping Centre, the entrance to Britannia is on the ground floor of the shopping centre. The centre has a multi-storey car park which has 700 free parking places, including dedicated disabled parking spaces on Levels C and E. It is recommended to park on Level C or E, which have access into the centre.



PALACE OF HOLYROOD HOUSE

Palace tours and abbey ruins

Pay a visit to the King's official residence in Edinburgh and become familiar with royal legends including Mary Queen of Scots.

This old palace and its ruined abbey is a modern day royal residence. Despite its age, the palace tours and abbey ruins are surprisingly accessible. The experience has been well designed for visitors who'd enjoy a sensory friendly tour with visual communication cards and a photo journey available on the website.

The palace has guides available that are subtitled or available in a BSL format. There is also an

audio described guide to accompany you on the main visitor route. Wheelchair users may wish to use these guides to view film content on Mary Queen of Scots chambers which are accessed by a steep spiral staircase. The rest of the palace is largely wheelchair accessible, including the State Apartments and garden with the Abbey ruins.



Quick Tip!

A limited number of accessible parking spaces are available outside the palace on Horse Wynd. Alternatively you could take one of the city's accessible tour buses straight to the foot of the Royal Mile.

The home of Scottish democracy

Step inside this award-winning building and get ready to witness Parliament business in action – it's an experience you won't want to miss!

Tours last around 45 minutes but fill up fast, so we recommend booking in advance to secure your spot. For a quicker more spontaneous visit, you can join a 10-minute talk in the Main Hall. These talks cover everything from the fascinating history and the work of MSPs to the architecture and design of the building. Best of all, no booking required!

There's a Changing Places toilet in the building and all public areas are easy to wheel around. If you're joining a tour, you can request a BSL interpreter a few weeks before you visit. There



is also a handy BSL map to guide you around points of interest. For a quieter visit, aim to go on a Monday or Friday – it's a bit quieter, perfect for soaking up the atmosphere at your own pace.



DYNAMIC EARTH 

A tactile history of earth

Tucked behind the Scottish Parliament is the futuristic looking and immersive Dynamic Earth.

You enter the science centre via a ramp to the front door, or from the underground car park lift. Inside you can experience the Big Bang, touch an iceberg, watch the northern lights or take shelter from a tropical rainstorm!

As the country's top earth science centre and planetarium, you can expect lots of interactive experiences inside. For a more sensory-friendly experience, you can borrow sensory bags or look out for relaxed opening hours which have fewer visitors and different lighting and audio effects.



Quick Tip!

Strobe lighting is used in places throughout, but staff can advise you of where these are and assist you on your visit.

Museums and Galleries

A classic rainy-day activity, many of Edinburgh's museums and galleries are free and have very good accessibility.



Image: VisitScotland/Peter Dibdin

About the National Galleries

Edinburgh's National Galleries include four art spaces located around the city. These are the National Gallery which contains one of the world's most impressive art collections; Modern One and Modern Two which house Paolozzi's Studio and a stunning collection of modern art;

and the Portrait Gallery where you can get to know the faces behind Scotland.

All of these galleries use the Smartify app which lets you access audio descriptive tours, large print labels and detailed information about artworks on display. There are also short BSL videos and sensory maps on the website for all galleries to help you plan your visit. The galleries are free to visit, although charges may apply for special exhibitions.



NATIONAL GALLERY

World-class art in the city centre

Admire famous work by internationally renowned painters and enjoy Scottish art from 1800 to 1945.

The National Gallery is located on The Mound and overlooks East Princes Street Gardens, making it a lovely setting to stop for a lunch

or a cup of tea. This gallery has had special recognition from Alzheimer Scotland as a dementia-friendly space with a well-designed programme of concerts, tours and workshops. There is a very large toilet with a hoist and changing facilities on level three, and good wheelchair access throughout.

CITY ART CENTRE

A very Scottish gallery

An Old Town home for Edinburgh's nationally recognised collection of Scottish art.

With over 4,500 works of art on display across six floors accessible by lift, you could easily spend an afternoon exploring this gallery. Located opposite Waverley train station, admission is free

to the main gallery, although some temporary exhibitions are ticketed with an entry fee. A visual story is available on the website if you'd like to feel a little more prepared before you visit. And, if you fancy a wee scone before you leave, there's a fantastic accessible bakehouse on the ground floor.



PORTRAIT GALLERY

A neo-gothic portrait gallery

Enjoy stories of Scotland and its people told through portraiture in this dazzling art gallery.

Easily accessed by tram to St Andrews Square, the Portrait Gallery and its Café Portrait make for a great day out. Don't miss the astonishing Great Hall with its Zodiac ceiling, adorned with thousands of stars and constellations. If you're a Blue Badge holder, it's a little-known fact that cars may park in the back lane of the gallery.

MODERN 1 AND 2

Modern art, twice

Modern One and Modern Two are built across the road from each other and house some of the world's most exciting contemporary and modern art. Get up close to the work of pop-artist Paolozzi with many of his sculptures and

graphic art displayed at Modern Two. At Modern One, look out for upcoming installations and shows and tuck into a legendary scone at the gallery café. Both galleries have lifts to all floors and accessible toilets. There's a Changing Places toilet in the car park behind Modern One.



FRUITMARKET GALLERY

Contemporary art

This spacious, former fruit and vegetable market is a free contemporary art space with a bookshop and café.

With an entrance right beside Waverley train station, this art gallery is easily accessed on your way in and out of the city centre. The space is well laid out for wheelchair and powerchair

users as it has smooth flat floors, an automatic entrance and a dropped reception counter. There are three accessible toilets within the building and a Changing Places toilet in the train station and the Booking Office pub which is a two minute walk around the corner.


Quick Tip!

You can download all of the gallery's printed material from the website before your visit.

MUSEUM OF SCOTTISH FIRE HERITAGE

A backstreet, fire fighting museum

This free, action-packed museum can be found on a tenement-lined street just off Leith Walk.

Built alongside a real fire station, five interactive galleries unearth the history of Scottish firefighting and show us what it's like to be a firefighter today. You'll discover how firefighters respond to 'Call Outs', get up close to historic fire trucks, and even learn about the role of dogs in the force.

Its access is just as impressive. Blue Badge holders may park on the street outside, and it's easy to reach McDonald Road by both bus and

tram. As a modern expansion to the existing fire station, ease of movement has been carefully considered throughout. Wheeling into the museum is straightforward with an automatic door and a lift to the main space. Just take a little extra care when moving around the galleries as lighting is low throughout.



Quick Tip!

If you time it right, you may be able to spot firefighters doing their daily drills in the training yard.

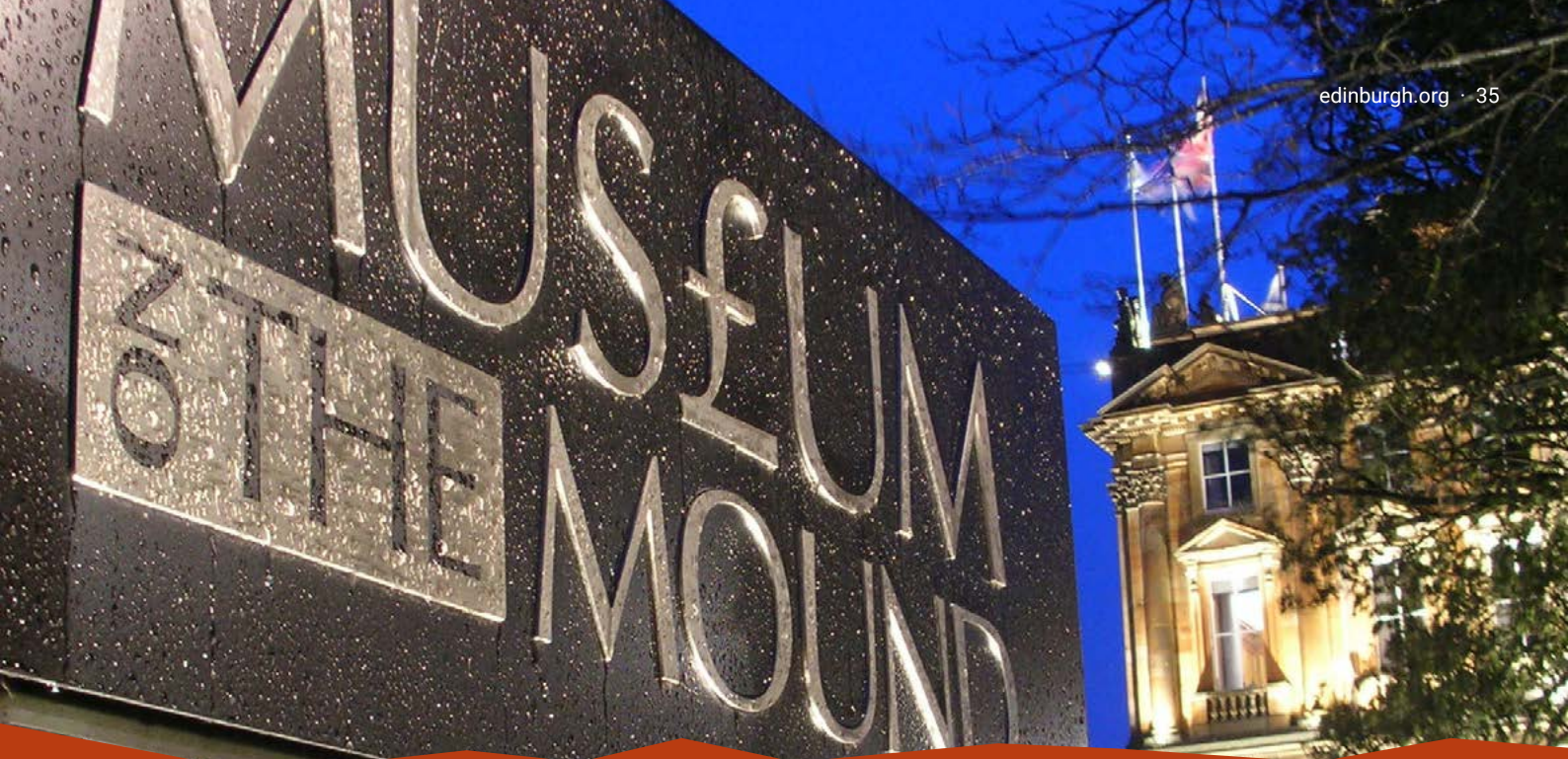


DOVECOT GALLERY

Tapestries and textiles

Watch weavers at work from an accessible balcony. Previously the oldest public baths in Edinburgh, this gallery and tapestry studio on Infirmary Street is a colourful and mesmerising place to visit. You can watch from above as

weavers create colourful shapes and patterns in the old swimming pool. There are lifts to all levels and accessible toilets within the building. It's a five minutes' walk to the nearest Changing Places toilet in the National Museum of Scotland.



MUSEUM ON THE MOUND

A free museum about... money!

Venture inside this old bank head office and see for yourself what £1million looks like.

Best reached by bus, the Museum on the Mound tells the story of money. From trade and crime to technology and design, there's lots to learn at this niche museum. Display cabinets have room for wheelchair access, meaning you can get up

close to the objects on show. There are large print guides available and induction loops in the reception and exhibition space.



Quick Tip!

Sensory bags and communication cards can be borrowed from the front desk.

SURGEONS' HALL MUSEUMS

Surgical storytelling

Not one for the faint hearted, this fascinating building contains three museums packed with real specimens and eye-opening exhibits.

Inside you'll find the Wohl Pathology Museum where you can learn about the role of women in surgery. There's also the History of Surgery Museum where Edinburgh's contribution to medicine is put on display. Not to mention the story of Burke and Hare, the city's notorious murderers. Finally, The Dental Collection is where you can see a 19th century dentist's office and all the grisly instruments that were used way back then.

The best route to the museum, located on busy Nicolson Street, is by bus. Drop-off right outside the museum isn't advised due to the volume of traffic passing by. The museum entrance is step-free with automatic doors and there is a lift to all levels. Only a small portion of the Wohl Pathology Museum has narrow access which may not be suitable to all wheelchair users. There are interactive touch screens displaying the items within this section.



Quick Tip!

There is an interactive dissection table in the Wohl Pathology Museum and visitors can get hands on with new surgical tools and procedures.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

The locals' favourite T-rex

Marvel at the museum's Grand Gallery and set off on one of the museum's many tours or trails.

This free museum has level access from Chambers Street and a Changing Places toilet in the entrance hall. As a popular place to visit, the museum can be busy and loud at times, but there are relaxed opening times and sensory backpacks available from the main entrance.

To feel a little more prepared, you can download a visual story and sensory map to help you plan your route through the museum.



Quick Tip!

For visually impaired visitors, tours with handling opportunities can be arranged around a month in advance.



MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD

Retro and nostalgic

This 1950s museum is dedicated to the history of childhood, with toys and clothes from the 1800s to the present day.

With galleries across five floors in an old building on the Royal Mile, not every nook and cranny

of this free museum is step-free or accessible by lift. That being said, it is still worth a visit to explore the galleries which are accessible, and to rummage through the fun-filled gift shop. Enjoy the various touch objects, videos and audio transcripts which will take you back to the good old days... no matter your age!



Culture

A show-stopping city all year round, these venues all have accessible performances listed on their websites. If you're visiting during the August festivals, there's a good chance you'll be seated in one of these great theatres.



FESTIVAL THEATRE

A dramatic blend of old and new

A splendid art-deco theatre is nestled behind a glass exterior on Nicolson Street. The Festival Theatre has shape-shifted through the ages to become the grand and accessible auditorium it is today.

There's no drama where accessibility is concerned at the Festival Theatre. Here, staff have everything in hand with their reassuring 'can-do' approach to access. There's a visual guide on their website if you'd like to become familiarised with the theatre before your visit. You'll find all the accessible performances listed online as well as monthly dementia friendly

activities such as singing, show and tell, and musical jams, too.

For touch tours before audio described performances, be sure to book a space in advance to make the most of the experience. There are accessible toilets on levels one and two and eight dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in the auditorium. It has the perfect balance of old theatre charm with all the comforts of a well-designed, modern space.



Don't miss

There's a little-known courtyard beside the theatre where visitors who require easy access may park. Be sure to book a space in advance or take advantage of the theatre's dedicated drop-off and pick-up service.

EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE

Interval snacks to your seat

You might be surprised to find that this former cinema, despite not having any lifts, has surprisingly good access. There are just a few access tips and tricks worth knowing before you go.

Of all the city's theatres, the Edinburgh Playhouse with its programme of musicals and concerts is one of the easiest to get to. Take the tram to Picardy Place, a bus to the Omni Centre, a taxi to the nearby drop-off point or a train to Waverley Station which is around a ten minutes' walk from the theatre. There are also numerous accessible parking spaces in the nearby St James Quarter car park.

Depending on the type of performance you're attending, there are recommended seats on different levels around the theatre. The Circle is best for wheelchair users and those who require step-free access. The Stalls are recommended



Image: VisitScotland, Paul Tomkins

for those who have booked an audio described show or who require a closer view of the stage. The Playhouse lists all these seating tips on their website.



Quick Tip!

Use the QR code at your seat to request drinks and snacks before the performance or during the interval. They'll be delivered straight to your seat!

TRAVERSE THEATRE

Theatre worth talking about

Scotland's new writing theatre is sure to spark some riveting post-show conversations. Take the lift down to the underground bar to reflect on Traverse Theatre's original, often risky, productions.

Located on Cambridge Street just off Lothian Road, Traverse Theatre is easily accessed by bus or taxi. There's step-free access through automatic doors and a lift to all levels. If you're booking wheelchair accessible seating, it's best to reserve your space by phoning ahead. Staff will help you find the best seating. Check out their website for captioned, BSL interpreted, audio described and relaxed performances.

LYCEUM

Victorian comfort

Expect to see some of the country's best new drama on stage in this Victorian theatre. It's well over a hundred years old, yet inside it's plush, comfortable and has very good access.

The theatre's accessible Stalls Boxes have removable armchairs and room for up to 18 wheelchair users. You get a fantastic view from these seats and they're reassuringly close to the lift. For a truly smooth experience, you can pre-order interval drinks at the bar before the performance. If you speak to a member of the Front of House team when ordering, they may be able to bring your drinks to your seat in the Stalls Boxes.

Elsewhere in the theatre there are tactile row markers to help you find your seat and booster cushions or footstools may be requested to add even more comfort. You can browse all their accessible performances on the website.

USHER HALL

One more tune

This Edwardian concert hall on Lothian Road has some of the best acoustics in the country.

If you love music, you'll love Usher Hall. With a huge programme of concerts, orchestra, dance, comedy and more, this is a much-loved venue in the city's West End. There are lifts to all levels and wheelchair accessible seating in the Stalls and the Grand Circle. When a standing gig is on, a wheelchair accessible platform is installed with an unbeatable view of the stage. A few of the bars aren't very accessible but, if this affects you, staff will bring drinks to your seat instead.



THE USHER HALL



Food and drink

Edinburgh, where culinary delights await around every corner! From cozy cafés to Michelin-starred restaurants, our vibrant city is a foodie's paradise bursting with flavours and experiences to tantalize your taste buds. Whatever your palate desires, Edinburgh promises a culinary adventure like no other.





FLAVOURS OF SCOTLAND

Flavours of Scotland

It's no secret that Edinburgh has some of the best food and drink in the country, including a huge selection of international food. If you're visiting from afar, here are some flavours to look out for when out and about.

Whisky

If you enjoy a tipple, there's surely no experience as fun as discovering which whisky is for you. Learn everything you need to know with a whisky experience before trying out one of Edinburgh's other distilleries such as Holyrood Distillery or the vertical Port of Leith Distillery.

Street food

Locals have grown to love street food, probably because of the huge selection of vans and pop-up kitchens that arrive during the August festivals. Street food is now in demand all year round! Try Edinburgh Street Food (ESF) opposite the St James Quarter for a selection of the city's favourite traders. It's warm inside and has an accessible toilet, plus you can order food from various stalls straight to your table. Don't forget to visit the weekly farmers' markets or, if you're heading downhill towards Leith, see what's on offer at the Leith Walk Police Box, you might just be in for a treat.

Seafood

Scotland is known for its seafood and there are plenty of places to sample it in the city. Keep your eyes peeled for Edinburgh's Seafood Festival, which takes place at the St James Quarter.

Bakeries

Edinburgh must have a sweet tooth as there is no shortage of bakeries in the city. Try family-run Mimi's Bakehouse who have shops in several neighbourhoods, including the ground floor of City Art Centre. If you're in Leith you might be lucky enough to smell shortbread baking at the Shortbread House of Edinburgh. Look out for their goods in shops around the city, or order a box to collect from the factory.

Full Scottish Breakfast

Find out if your hotel puts on a full Scottish and start your day with a taste of haggis!



Discover more

Explore Edinburgh's food and drink scene at edinburgh.org/foodanddrink

JOHNNIE WALKER PRINCES STREET

Discover your dram

It's easy to forget about access altogether when visiting this modern, whisky discovery experience.

You may wonder, is there anything they haven't thought of? With accessible toilets on every level, alternating between left and right-side transfer spaces, you can visit stress-free. The stylish look and feel of the building carries through to the large Changing Places toilet on the ground floor.

As you travel upwards through the building, colourful elevators and hidden platform lifts transport you to different whisky discovery areas. With a drink in hand, there are thoughtfully placed shelves to place your glass if you are at seated height.

There are various ways to enjoy this experience,



including audio described and captioned storytelling as well as BSL tours. Braille signage is incorporated throughout the building. A handy way to arrive and depart is by tram to the West End stop which is a five minutes' walk from the entrance.



Quick Tip!

Head to the rooftop bar for a very special view of Edinburgh Castle.



THE SCOTCH WHISKY EXPERIENCE

Journey to the glen

Step through this door at the top of the Royal Mile and be transported to a highland glen.

A bit like the Narnia of whisky, it's easy to forget you're in Scotland's capital once you've entered The Scotch Whisky Experience. This immersive tour takes you from the origins of whisky through to its maturation which you witness from the inside of a cask. For families, there's a tour suitable for children who'll be treated to an Irn Bru soft drink while the adults sample the whisky. The building is wheelchair accessible and care has been taken to translate the tours into BSL, ASL and IS, delivered by an audio-visual handset. The narrowest entry way you will encounter on the tour is 85 cm wide, and assistance dogs are welcome.



Quick Tip!

On-site at the Scotch Whisky Experience, Amber Restaurant offers seasonal dishes and drams.



Shopping

New Town is where you'll find Edinburgh's main shopping streets. Princes Street is a long stretch of shops with numerous pedestrian crossings. Parallel George Street has on-street parking and slightly quieter pavements and zebra crossings. For independent finds the surrounding neighbourhoods are calling your name.



An iconic retail district

As if by magic, the surrounding streets disappear into this glass-roofed galleria where outdoor meets indoor shopping.

There are many ways to access this modern shopping, dining and entertainment quarter. You could park in one of the 70 accessible parking bays below the shops. Or you could take a train to Edinburgh Waverley and walk for two minutes to the main entrance. Tram is another popular option. The flattest route would be to hop off at St Andrews Square and follow the path through Multrees Walk, a luxurious shopping street worth visiting, even if just for the window shopping!

There's a Changing Places toilet on Level One and many of the shops and restaurants have their own accessible toilets too. If you have any questions during your visit, the staff at Guest Services are among the friendliest you'll meet.



Quick Tip!

This building will surprise you with its many hidden viewpoints of the city skyline. Observe Leith Walk unfolding its way down to the waterfront or take a lift to the W Edinburgh hotel rooftop, for one of the most iconic views of Edinburgh you could possibly find.

MARKETS

Market treasure troves

From farmers' markets bursting with fresh produce to craft markets and much-loved flea markets, you never know what gems you might pick up in Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh Farmers' Market pops-up in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle every Saturday. Stalls are laid out on a paved, flat surface above a multi-storey car park. There's also the family of three markets which draw in the locals from Stockbridge (Sundays), Leith and Grassmarket

(Saturdays). These have food stalls as well as art and craft stalls from local makers. In Leith, the first market of the month has a greater focus on vegan produce.

If it's a vintage or second-hand find you're after, one of the best flea markets in the city takes place at Out of the Blue Drill Hall in Leith. It's a favourite with locals and the hall has accessible toilets and a café.



Discover more

Explore Edinburgh's markets edinburgh.org/markets

Discover more about shopping in Edinburgh at edinburgh.org/shopping

Sport

When it comes to sport in Edinburgh, football and rugby are fan favourites. Look out for green and maroon scarves when the football's on or soak up the rugby atmosphere at Scotland's biggest stadium.



Fierce football rivalry

If you're a football fan, you won't want to miss derby day.

Two of Edinburgh's oldest professional football clubs have a historic rivalry that makes for some very nervy derbies. Leith-based Hibernian Football Club (Hibs) and Gorgie-based Heart of Midlothian Football Club (Hearts) have stadiums at different sides of the city. Both have a drive to become as accessible as possible for their disabled supporters, each providing audio descriptive live commentary and wheelchair accessible viewing areas.



Quick Tip!

Hibs' Easter Road Stadium has sensory packs for supporters who would like a more sensory-friendly match day experience.

RUGBY

Kick-off at Scotland's biggest stadium

For the rugby fans, Scottish Gas Murrayfield Stadium is the place to be for local and international games.

It's hard to miss this massive stadium just west of the city centre, especially if you're travelling

into Edinburgh by train. It's around a twenty minutes' walk from Haymarket train station, but the tram stop is much closer. The stadium has a Changing Places toilet and either lift or ramp access to all wheelchair accessible seating.

More sport to enjoy

Golf

Many of Edinburgh's parks have 'links' in the name as golf is a big part of life for many in the capital. You can have a casual game for fun on Bruntsfield Links or take a trip to Fife for some of the best courses in the world.

Rock climbing

Scots love to climb and we have plenty of hills! For something a little more adventurous, you can try rock-climbing or para-climbing at Edinburgh International Climbing Arena (EICA).

Water sports

A country of islands and lochs, we love to get out on the water, no matter how cold it may be. Swimmers can take a dip at Portobello Beach or, for something a little faster, you could try accessible powerboating beneath the bridges with Wetwheels in South Queensferry.

Outdoors

A city it may be, but Edinburgh has the outdoors right on its doorstep. There are countless accessible parks and green spaces to enjoy.



Athens of the north

An open-air art gallery with views from the city to the sea.

The unusual looking National Monument on top of the hill is an unfinished replica of Athens Parthenon with twelve giant columns. The hill was once a hub of astronomy and timekeeping in the city, and the former observatory is now Collective, a free contemporary art space. While it might seem like reaching these landmarks involves a challenging uphill trek, fear not! Getting to the National Monument and Collective is easier than you think. For Blue Badge holders, parking is available right outside Collective via the access road from Waterloo Place, ensuring a hassle-free visit. Alternatively, taxis can drop you off right at the doorstep. And once inside, you'll find three accessible toilets to ensure your comfort.



Quick Tip!

Download Observers' Walks audio guides to the monuments of Calton Hill from Collective's website.



ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH

350 years of plant life

Inhale fresh air as you wander acres of woodland and gardens in the north of the city.

Book a seasonal BSL garden tour or join a daily guided walk to learn about adventurers and plants from around the globe. The garden has seating throughout and accessible toilets in the visitor centre and restaurants. It's easy to arrive by bus from the East Gate at Inverleith Row.



Quick Tip!

There are portable hearing loops available from the welcome counter at the East Gate and at other counters in the gardens.





Image: © Lost Shore Surf Resort

LOST SHORE SURF RESORT

An inclusive surf destination

Lost Shore Surf Resort, just eight miles from Edinburgh, is the ultimate surf destination – designed for everyone. Whether you're a seasoned surfer or catching your first wave, the resort's state-of-the-art wave pool delivers perfect, consistent swells, making it an incredible place to experience the thrill of surfing. With step-free access across much of the resort, six accessible lodges, tarmac-accessible parking, and a spacious dining area, it's clear that

inclusion is more than a promise – it's a priority. In partnership with Inclusive Surfing Scotland, the resort ensures that everyone, regardless of mobility, can enjoy the rush of the waves.



Quick Tip!

Thoughtful features like touchpads on every door and a proactive approach to feedback make Lost Shore a leader in accessible adventure.



EDINBURGH ZOO

A sensory friendly zoo

If a zoo on 82 acres of hillside sounds like a tricky place to visit, prepare to be pleasantly surprised.

With over 2,500 animals to spot, a trip to Edinburgh Zoo is well worth a short bus ride from the city centre. Much thought has gone into accessibility at this picturesque zoo, so don't be put off by its hilly terrain.

A mobility vehicle with room for one wheelchair passenger and four seated passengers can be requested to take you up the zoo's steeper inclines. An accessibility map shows where there

are steps or hills and has the mobility vehicle phone number displayed.

The zoo is a lively, often noisy place to visit. Sensory bags are available to aid focus and relaxation. These include the zoo's accessibility map, ear defenders, sunglasses, fidget toys and, a most useful addition to see the animals, binoculars!



Quick Tip!

Download or ask for an assistance dog map to follow recommended walking routes around the zoo.

More outdoors

Edinburgh is a city with a superb back garden. It has its parks, including Holyrood Park with the extinct volcano Arthur's Seat and the popular Meadows in Southside. Many of the city's greenspaces have smooth, wide paths to walk and wheel across.

For that crisp, seaside breeze, Portobello Beach has a wheelchair accessible promenade and plenty of cafes where you can warm up with a cuppa or a toastie. You can also book a beach wheelchair ahead of your visit. At Newhaven, the last stop on the tram route, there's a waterfront walkway with some charming lighthouses to admire. It's a good spot for walking the dog and

shielding your fish 'n' chips from the seagulls.

If you enjoy wildlife and nature, the winding Water of Leith can be reached from many parts of the city. It's like nature's version of a hop-on, hop-off bus! If you're lucky, you'll spot birdlife including herons and kingfishers, and maybe even an otter. Some parts are more accessible than others, but a good place to start is at The Shore in Leith.



Discover more

Only in Edinburgh for a weekend? See how to make the most of your time with the Accessible Edinburgh weekend itinerary edinburgh.org/accessible-itinerary

Accommodation

Finding the right place to stay is essential for a great trip. From practical hotels to luxury stays and some truly magical accessible accommodation a little further afield, here are some recommendations for you to explore.





Practical places to stay

Motel One Edinburgh Princes

With views onto Princes Street and a convenient central location, this hotel is handily placed if you plan to do lots of sightseeing. It's across the road from Edinburgh Waverley train station and close to central bus and tram stops putting the entire city at your fingertips. With 14 spacious accessible rooms inside, this is a good option for an affordable stay in the city. It's worth noting that all rooms are above ground level, and two large lifts will take you from the foyer up to the reception.

Premier Inn Edinburgh City Centre Royal Mile Hotel

Conveniently located at the Old Town side of Edinburgh Waverley train station, this hotel on Market Street has all the good accessible features you'd expect of a Premier Inn hotel. There's a taxi rank on the street outside which is quieter and a little less rushed than the rank on Princes Street. This is a good base for exploring the Royal Mile and beyond.

Village Hotel Edinburgh

If you prefer to sleep away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre, this modern hotel and spa is a 15 minutes' car journey away with plenty of parking spaces and buses passing by. It has six accessible rooms with two on each floor. This would be a good option for a group of travellers, especially if you plan to explore Edinburgh and perhaps further afield by car.

Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel

Good for groups of travellers, this youth hostel is close to bus, tram and rail links. It's well placed for exploring Leith to the north and the rest of the city centre and Old Town towards the south. There are three accessible rooms and two large lifts inside. The choice is yours whether you'd like to self-cater using the shared kitchen or enjoy the rather tasty food from the café bar and restaurant.



Luxury and boutique stays

The Balmoral

It's hard to picture Edinburgh without conjuring up an image of The Balmoral's historic clocktower illuminating the east end of Princes Street. The Balmoral, with its kilted doorman, has three accessible rooms with all the luxurious touches you'd expect of this majestic railway hotel. If you're driving, be sure to make use of the valet car parking service. If travelling by rail, the hotel perches above Edinburgh Waverley train station on North Bridge, which happens to be the flattest route to walk or wheel from New Town into Old Town.

W Edinburgh

A more recent addition to the Edinburgh skyline is the 'ribbon building' within the St James Quarter. Locals love to talk about architecture in their city, and this modern swirling building is a favourite talking point. Once inside, the panoramic views of the city skyline are among the best you'll find. The mobility accessible rooms have roll in showers, and hearing accessible rooms or kits are also available within this new age, luxurious hotel.

Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian

A former grand old railway station, the "Caley" as it is affectionately known by locals, has three accessible rooms. Located at the West End, this luxury hotel is well placed to explore Lothian Road's cultural quarter with its many arts and concert venues. If driving you can use the hotel's car park, otherwise there are well-served bus and tramp stops nearby.

Brooks Hotel Edinburgh

This charming West End boutique B&B has an excellent, little-known ground floor accessible bedroom. A very well-thought out feature is its adjoining bunk room, perfect if you're travelling with family, a carer or personal assistant. The B&B's magic is in the little touches, including the modern and vintage furnishings that have been handpicked from Edinburgh's independent shops. It's great for exploring the arts venues around Lothian Road and is a short walk or wheel from the Union Canal.

Fingal

At Fingal, it's all about cabins not rooms. This floating hotel with 22 cabins was once painted as a dazzle ship and now emanates old world charm and elegance. It's berthed in Leith where there are many bars, restaurants and sights to explore including Fingal's sister ship, the Royal Yacht Britannia. There are accessible cabins on board with spacious shower rooms, and there are accessible toilets within the Lighthouse Bar and near The Ballroom.



Discover more

Explore more accommodation options in Edinburgh edinburgh.org/accommodation and find disabled access reviews of accommodation at euansguide.com



Edinburgh venue accessibility summaries

Attractions

Camera Obscura and World of Illusions

549 Castlehill, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 2ND

Edinburgh's oldest tourist attraction, housing the famous Camera Obscura and five floors with over 100 hands-on exhibits for all ages.

There is no on-site parking for this attraction, but Blue Badge spaces are available on the street outside. There is no step-free access to the venue, which has seven levels that can only be accessed by steps. Standard toilets can be found on the first and forth floor. There is seating available inside, and a clearly signed hearing assistance system. Sensory packs (including ear defenders, fidget toys, and more) can be reserved if you contact the attraction in advance.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/camera-obscura-and-world-of-illusions>

Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club - Leisure Club

Kirknewton, Edinburgh, EH27 8EB

One of the top golfing destinations in Scotland and luxurious leisure centre with indoor pool, gym, tennis courts and fitness classes.

There is on-site parking available here with designated Blue Badge parking. The most accessible entrance has steps, a slight ramp/slope and an automatic door. The building has two floors, and there is step-free access to the majority of the venue once inside. There is stepped or platform lift access to the Brasserie restaurant, and two accessible toilets on-site. Visitors can watch a virtual tour online, and a wheelchair can be reserved for your visit by contacting the venue.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/dalmahoy-hotel-and-country-club-leisure-club>

Dynamic Earth

Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AS

Edinburgh's world-class science centre and planetarium, telling the epic story of planet earth.

On-site parking and Blue Badge spaces are available. The main entrance is step-free, with a slight ramp leading up to manual doors. There is step-free access inside and a lift to all floors. There is also ramped access to the Planetarium and some sections of the tour. There is also audio format information, audio description, facilities for assistance dogs and maps, and a wheelchair for visitors to use. Inside the venue there is an accessible toilet for the use of everyone, step-free standard toilets and a toilet designated as gender neutral. It also has "relaxed" opening hours on Friday afternoons, with reduced noise, reduced number of visitors, more lighting, and more seating in visitor areas.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/dynamic-earth>

Edinburgh Printmakers

Castle Mills, 1 Dundee Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9FP

A creative hub for printmaking and the visual arts, with courses and workshops, two galleries, shop, venue hire space, café and community garden.

There is on-site parking available here, though no designated Blue Badge parking. The main entrance has level step-free access, an automatic door and manual doors. There is also step-free access once inside with lift access to other floors. Seating is available, as well as large print information, audio description, a clearly signed hearing assistance system and facilities for assistance dogs. Sensory packs, including sensory maps, can be reserved. There are three accessible toilets across the premises.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/edinburgh-printmakers>

Hopetoun House

Queensferry, South Queensferry, EH30 9RW

A beautiful stately home, filled with stunning collections and sitting in magnificent grounds with nature trails and scenic walks.

There is on-site parking available here with designated Blue Badge parking. The main entrance is not step-free, but the Colonnades entrance to the right of the main doors is the most accessible, with step-free access up a slight ramp and with manual doors to enter. Once inside, there is step-free access across the ground floor. There is stepped only access to the first floor bedrooms and central domed staircase (though there is a virtual tour on a tablet available to show the inaccessible upper floor bedrooms), and no public access to the other floors. However, here is stepped or platform lift access to the Charter Room and ramped access to the Ballroom and the Tapestry Room toilets. There are four accessible toilets, and a wheelchair visitors can borrow. The venue can also offer seating, large print information, a companion/carer discount, facilities for assistance dogs, a virtual tour, maps, an accessible route map and sensory packs.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/hopetoun-house>

John Knox House/Scottish Storytelling Centre

Scottish Storytelling Centre, High St, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR

The oldest, original medieval building surviving on the Royal Mile/an arts venue with a seasonal programme of storytelling, theatre, music, exhibitions, workshops and festivals.

The main entrance is not step-free, but there is step-free access via the John Knox House located at the left of the building. There is stepped only access to the first and second floors of John Knox House, but there is lift access to the first and second floors of the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

The attraction has three accessible toilets on the ground floor. The venue can also offer seating, large print information, Braille information, audio format information, audio description, a hearing assistance system which is not signed, a companion/carer discount and facilities for assistance dogs. There are designated spaces for wheelchair users in the theatre, alongside seats for companions.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/john-knox-house-scottish-storytelling-centre>

Johnnie Walker Princes Street

145 Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4BL

Immersive exploration through the 200 year old history behind the world's best-selling Scotch whisky, with tours, tastings, rooftop bars and shop.

The main entrance has step-free access, and there is stepped or platform lift access to several parts of the tour route across the six floors. The guided tour takes about 1.5 hours to complete and there is step-free access throughout. Visitors should be aware the tour may include strobe or flashing lights, strong smells, lighting effects, 3D visual effects on screen and interactive video effects. Inside there is an accessible toilet solely for the use of disabled people, a Changing Places facility and an accessible toilet for the use of everyone. The venue can also offer audio description and a hearing assistance system. There is a separate your exit in the foyer, which is step-free with automatic doors.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/johnnie-walker-princes-street>

Palace of Holyroodhouse

Canongate, Edinburgh, EH8 8DX

The King's official residence in Edinburgh and the home of Scottish royal history.

The main entrance has level step-free access. The building has three floors, and there is step-free access once inside with lift access to other

floors. There is stepped only access to the upper level of the tower, including Mary Queen of Scots' Chambers. Visitors can borrow a mobility walker and wheelchair by contacting the venue. The venue can also provide seating, audio format information, audio description, a BSL interpreter, a companion/carer discount and sensory packs. There is an accessible toilet which can be found in the toilet block in the Mews Courtyard. There is a Separate exit, which is not step-free.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/palace-of-holyroodhouse>

The Museum on the Mound

The Mound, Edinburgh, EH1 1YZ

Free to visit museum, which gives a fascinating insight into the world of economics and money.

The main entrance has level step-free access and a manual door. The building has 1 floor once inside, which is step-free. There is an accessible toilet on-site. The venue can also provide seating, large print information, a clearly signed hearing assistance system, a safe or quiet space, facilities for assistance dogs, maps and sensory packs. The tour includes interactive video effects, and information is provided via boards and television/screens.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/the-museum-on-the-mound>

The Royal Yacht Britannia

Ocean Drive, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6JJ

Queen Elizabeth II's former floating palace, now berthed in Edinburgh's historic Port of Leith.

There is on-site parking available here with designated Blue Badge parking. The main entrance level step-free access and an open entry point with no doors. The venue has five floors, with step-free access once inside and lift access to other floors. There is ramped access to several areas of the venue, and visitors can borrow a wheelchair during their visit. There is step-free access along the tour route, via ramp/slope, and

the tour can be adapted to avoid inaccessible areas. The venue can also offer seating, large print information, audio format information, audio description, a handheld device with sign language, a clearly signed hearing assistance system and sensory packs. There is a Separate exit located in the shop to the left of the counter, and there is step-free level access at this exit.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/the-royal-yacht-britannia>

The Scotch Whisky Experience

354 Castlehill, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 2NE

Discover the story of Scotch whisky with guided tours and tasting experiences.

There is not on-site parking available here but there is designated Blue Badge on street parking nearby. The most accessible entrance has a slight ramp/slope and automatic doors. There is step-free access once inside with lift access to the other five floors. There is also ramped access to the accessible toilets on floor -1 and the tour rooms on floor 1, and two accessible toilets on-site. The guided tour takes approximately 50 minutes and there is step-free access along the tour route. Your information can be provided via touchscreens, subtitles, handheld information devices, multi-language audio, television/screen and BSL. The tour includes scratch and sniff cards, nosing and tasting experiences and cards explaining the aromas and tastes of the whiskeys. All rooms with fixed seating throughout the tour have designated seating areas for wheelchair users.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/the-scotch-whisky-experience>

Accommodation

Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club - Hotel and Function Rooms

Kirknewton, Edinburgh, EH27 8EB

Set amidst 1,000 acres of beautiful parkland, this country estate has 215 rooms and suites, restaurant and bar, leisure club and two 18 hole golf courses.

There is on-site parking available here with designated Blue Badge parking. There are four step-free entrances, including the main entrance. The building is made up of four floors, and there is step-free access to the majority of the premises. There are accessible toilets and changing facilities available. There is also ramped access to the accommodation block and accommodation with some adaptations in place, including a deaf alert system, a panic alarm, vibrating alarm pillows, bath mats and a medication fridge.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/dalmahoy-hotel-and-country-club-hotel-and-function-rooms>

Fingal Hotel

Alexandra Dock, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 7DX

A luxury floating hotel permanently berthed on Edinburgh's waterfront.

On-site parking is available for this hotel, though no designated Blue Badge spaces. The main entrance is step-free, and there is lift access to all levels once inside. There is a wheelchair for hire, additional seating, large print information, and facilities for assistance dogs. There is an accessible toilet located near the lift, and two accessible rooms available.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/fingal-hotel>

Wilde Aparthotel by Staycity Edinburgh Grassmarket

26 King's Stables Road, Edinburgh, EH1 2JY

Studio, 1 and 2 bedroom self-catering apartments, with all the comforts of a hotel.

The main entrance here has level step-free access and an automatic door. There is step-free access once inside with lift access all four floors. There is an accessible toilet on the ground floor, approximately 10m from the front entrance. There is a separate exit which is also step-free and has an automatic door. There are 8 accessible en-suite rooms available, with an unobstructed minimum turning space next to the bed.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/wilde-aparthotel-by-staycity-edinburgh-grassmarket>

Tours

Edinburgh Bus Tours

Waverley Bridge, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH1 1BQ

See more of Edinburgh with a range of city bus tours.

There is standard on-street parking nearby, and step-free access to the building. The venue is made up of one floor which can be accessed step-free, and there are staff available for additional help and assistance. This venue also has audio description, maps, and a safe or quiet space for anybody who needs it. There is ramped access to the hop-on-hop-off service, and you can buy tickets online or from the conductor. There are two wheelchair spaces and priority seating in-board, and tour information can be provided via the live tour guide, headset audio guides, children's headset audio guides, televisions/screens, subtitles and/or a mobile app. There is also a portable hearing loop available.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/edinburgh-bus-tours>

Mercat Tours - History Walks and Ghost Tours

28 Blair Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1QR

Walking tour company, visiting a range of the city's most historic sites.

There is standard on-street parking nearby. These guided walking tours start at the Mercat Cross on the Royal Mile. Tickets can be obtained at the Mercat Cross site, outside the Mercat Tours office in Blair Street via a self-service touch screen, or in advance on-line via the Mercat Tours website, and carer/companion tickets are available. The most accessible tours are the History Walks Secrets of Edinburgh's Royal Mile and Treasure of the Old Town. Other History Walks with limited accessibility include Edinburgh Outlander Experience, Whisky Tour and Tasting (including tasting at the Underground Cellar at Blair Street), and Historic Underground, which include the Blair Street Underground Vaults. Tours can be adapted to include audio description, and a portable hearing loop/headset is available. There are no toilet facilities along the tour route. Some tours will involve steep sections or steps, but the tours can be adapted by the tour guides to provide an alternative accessible route. Please advise Storytellers of particular requirements at the start of the tour. Walking aids and stick stools can be requested in advance and returned at the end of the tour.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/mercato-tours-history-walks-and-ghost-tours>

Retail

Palace of Holyroodhouse Shop

Canongate, Edinburgh, EH8 8DX

Located at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and open throughout the year, selling gifts and souvenirs inspired by the royal palace.

There are 3 step-free entrances, including the main entrance. The one floor can be accessed step-free, and there is a member of staff available for help and assistance. All flooring in the shop is smooth and even. The venue can also provide

a BSL interpreter and a clearly signed hearing assistance system.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/palace-of-holyroodhouse-shop>

Food & Drink

The Cafe at the Palace

Palace of Holyroodhouse, Canongate, Edinburgh, EH8 8DX

Located at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, offering seasonal dishes using locally-sourced produce.

There is no on-site parking here, but there is designated Blue Badge on street parking nearby. The Mews entrance off the courtyard has level step-free access and manual doors. The building has one floor, and there is ramped access to the accessible toilet facility and the baby change room. The cafe includes a low level counter at the recommended height for wheelchair users, and the seating area has room for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre (150cm x 150cm), tables which are accessible to wheelchair users and a mixture of chairs with and without armrests.

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/visit-scotland/access-guides/the-cafe-at-the-palace>



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