

Beyond *COBBLE STONES*





Editorial “Beyond Cobblestones“

Tourism is jeopardized by cliché. Ever since Lonely Planet made backpacking some kind of cult, tourists following the mainstream hop-on hop-off travel style seem to be redundant. In spite of Lonely Planet, it would be wrong to dismiss clichés completely because they are a cliché for a reason. They are enjoyable. This guide will explore them and look beyond them as well. The historical city of Edinburgh can be experienced in an extraordinary and unique way. Much more lies beyond the cobblestones of Edinburgh’s Old Town apart from spooky ghosts and whisky. To avoid open-minded visitors stumbling between the capital’s cobblestones, this guide offers you a bit of the best of the city’s culture, history, literature, sports and food.

So why not spend a rainy day in one of the second-hand shops or try sugary fudge in one of the factories? If, surprisingly, the sun is actually shining, visit the harbour or even climb to the top of Arthur’s Seat for a chance to get rid of some of the calories put on while drinking beer during last night’s pub crawl.

A pub visit is a must for every Edinburgh trip. Without a pint of beer, haggis and bagpipe music the capital of Scotland would be a poorer place. So give it a try! Some clichés always have to be taken back home – even if it turns out to be just a torn and old-fashioned kilt.

Susanne Popp & Katharina Krüger

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20 Things to do in Edinburgh

► **Listen to a live folk band**

For example at the Royal Oak or Whistlebinkies (See p. 60)

► **Dance at a ceilidh**

The Bongo Club

37 Holyrood Road
0131 558 7604

Tennaich Celeidhs

South Hall, Pollock Halls
18 Holyrood Park Road
0131 621 4709

(See p. 25)

► **Find the toilets in the 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' Pub**

112 Hanover Street
0131 228 4543

► **Spit on the Heart of Midlothian**

High Street, in front of St. Giles Cathedral (See p. 7)

► **Watch a parliament debate**

Canongate
0131 348 5000

► **Travel into the dark ages**

Inchcolm Abbey
Inchcolm Island, Kingdom of Fife
01383 823 332

► **Be a treasure seeker for a day**

Cramond Island, Firth of Forth

► **Climb the seven hills of Edinburgh**

Castle Rock, Arthur's Seat, Corstorphine Hill, Calton Hill, Braid Hills, Blackford Hill and Craiglockhart Hill

► **Go skiing in the Pentland Hills**

Hillend Ski Centre
Biggar Road, Penicuik
0131 445 4433

<http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/Topic.aspx?TopicId=86>

► **Search for traces of the Knights Templar**

Rosslyn Chapel
Roslin
0131 4402159 (See p. 73)

► **Disappear into the underworld**

Edinburgh Vaults
Mercat House
28 Blair Street

► **Sail a boat 35 metres into the sky**

Falkirk Wheel
Alvechurch Waterway Holidays
Lime Road, Falkirk
0845 126 4098

► **Taste the 'Water of Life'**

e.g. Glenkinchie Distillery
Pencaitland, Tranent, East Lothian
01875 342004

► **Come eyeball to eyeball with a poltergeist**

(See p. 15)

► **Watch Edinburgh turn gold**

Go up Calton Hill during sunset (See p. 46)

► **Learn how fudge is made**

(See p. 53)

► **Be open for a culinary experience**

(See p. 47)

► **Get lost in the many second hand and vintage shops**

The best place to go is probably the Grassmarket (See p. 32)

► **Get inspiration in the Elephant House**

(See p. 23)

► **Start a conversation with a stranger**

People are unbelievably open and friendly.

Marion Kutter

The story-telling graveyard

Cold wind is blowing. The sun squints between the bald branches of the trees, seagulls are screeching and a dog is barking. A few stray visitors amble over the Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh. It is considered to be one of the scariest places on earth, at least according to some American broadcasting stations. Believing in spirits or not: the graveyard appears to be a place with a story to tell.

Located at the southern edge of the Old Town, many notable Edinburgh residents have been buried here since the 16th century. One of the most famous ones is the judge George Mackenzie who found his final rest in the Black Mausoleum in 1691. Since a vagrant tried to break into this tomb to get shelter, Mackenzie's "Poltergeist" is said to haunt between the graves. So more than 500 unexplained incidents have been reported during the last 5 years. As even an exorcist was unable to dispel the supernatural forces, a new padlock on the Mausoleum's door should guarantee the curious tourists' safety. Fearless ghost-busters could however take part in the "City of the Dead Ghost Tour", which is today the only chance to access this spooky part of Edinburgh. And if you are open minded to paranormal phenomena the tour will really present what it calls the "weirdest history with the wildest stories

and wickedest humour".

For some locals this is "typical traveller stuff like Nessie": The bartenders in "Greyfriar Bobby's Bar" next to the graveyard for example just shake their heads about visitors, taking pictures of old dirty tombstones as seriously as if they were the Royal insignia as well as placing airplane-tickets, cuddly toys and fresh flowers on the grave of a Skye Terrier every day. According to an Edinburgh legend, this brave dog Bobby spent 14 years guarding the grave of his owner John Gray un-

BOBBY GOES HOLLYWOOD



til he died himself. To keep the legend alive, the Dog Aid Society of Scotland erected a red granite stone on Bobby's grave and a life-size statue of him was built in front of the Bar dedicated to him. The monument is Edinburgh's smallest listed building. That sounds indeed like the perfect

Come to the Ceilidh - And learn to dance like the locals

Bouncing and twirling people are everywhere; it appears they are attempting to dance but failing miserably, at least to those who've never seen this sort of dancing before – welcome to the Ceilidh! After observing the apparent chaos for several minutes, it is time to work up the courage to join in, despite not knowing the steps. With the help of a Scottish gentleman who knows the ropes and using observation and imitation skills, it is quite possible to get used to the dances at the Ceilidh.

A Ceilidh ['kⁱh'e:li] is an event that consists mostly of different dances and involves Gaelic folk music. To take part in such an adventure, a visit to the BONGO Club is one of the best choices. One of the organisers of this Club is Eilidh Steel and she was willing to answer some questions concerning Ceilidh dancing.

Steel explained that Ceilidh is a Scottish Gaelic word which has evolved from Old Irish. Originally Ceilidh meant a social gathering. This can be associated with the fact that family-members and friends from the Highlands often lived far away from each other. Consequently they came up with a big event to unite the whole family and celebrate together. Such a feast involved, among other things, songs, story telling and dancing, although over the years dan-

cing became the main element of the Ceilidh.

Nowadays there are different kinds of Ceilidh dances depending on the area. Sometimes the speed of the dances differs as well. For example the dances on the west coast are much faster than the ones on the east coast.

At the BONGO Club several tourists, who want to experience something traditionally Scottish first-hand, take to the floor. This is normal but as Eilidh Steel confirmed, many locals come to join the dancing as well. The main motivation for attending a Ceilidh would be the social aspect and the fun. It is not surprising that a Ceilidh seems a little like a dating agency comparable to speed-dating only with more spinning. Partners usually change from dance to dance, if it is not a group dance, giving approximately three to five minutes to explore whether the chemistry is right or not.

Being a novice at Ceilidh dancing is no problem because there is always someone who explains the steps. You are free to skip dances in order to relax and to catch your breath, but you should grab the chance to dance and



24 hours in Edinburgh

If you are only in Edinburgh for 1 day and you think you can not see everything, you are wrong. The next pages will show you the best of Edinburgh condensed into 24 hours. This will guide you through the mysterious streets of Scotland's capital city, walking in the same footsteps as J.K. Rowling, the royal family, and Sir. Walter Scott.

First thing's first: get tickets into Edinburgh castle from their website at www.edinburghcastle.gov.uk

8:30 AM

Begin the day with a big traditional Scottish breakfast at the Elephant House [1] on George Bridge. This is within walking distance to your first destination the Edinburgh Castle. (See p. 22)

9:30 AM

The Castle [2], being in the heart of the city, is a great starting point for your day trip. Walking through the rooms leads you back through the centuries. Take a lot of pictures and enjoy the view of the city.

12:30 PM

Walk down Royal Mile and visit the St. Giles Cathedral [4].

11:30 AM

In the Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre [3] you will be immersed in the history of Whisky while driving on their barrels amusement ride. (See p. 55)



What's on the menu ?



Haggis – the Scottish national dish was immortalised by Robert Burns’ poem ‘Address to a Haggis’. Dark mysteries entwined around the traditional recipe for Haggis and nobody is too keen on revealing what the list of ingredients consists of.

Jonathan Crombie is the third generation of the family which owns the family-run business ‘Crombie’s of Edinburgh’. He is an expert in Haggis and meat products. He was willing to reveal some of the secrets and to do away with widespread prejudices.

Tracing back the dish’s origin one discovers that it makes its first appearance in Scandinavia and most likely

came to Scotland with the Vikings. Not only did Robert Burns make Haggis memorable forever, but he was also responsible for it becoming the national dish of Scotland. This is why the 25th of January is dedicated to Robert Burns and celebrated by reciting his poem and eating Haggis.

Each country has its own recipe but they are generally quite alike. The traditional recipe contains the innards of an animal, usually a sheep, suet, stock and seasoning. The Scottish recipe stands out by adding oatmeal whereas other countries might have used potatoes, beans or something similar to add some distinct flavour. Part of the reason why

Let's whistle!

It is Wednesday, 9:30pm. In Edinburgh, it is getting dark outside and the numbers on the streets are dwindling. It seems as if nobody is in a kind of clubbing mood in the middle of the week. Just a few rough and die-hard people sit in pubs drinking and chatting. But, there is music booming out of an inconspicuous pub on South Bridge. The name Whistlebinkies is gleaming in the darkness. Getting closer, a sign on which "live music" is posted can be spotted.

Try to whistle with a binky!

For nights out, Edinburgh has much to offer. Not only does it boast places like Grassmarket and Leith, but South Bridge - a street crossing touristy Royal Mile - is also worth a visit. At the bottom of South Bridge, Whistlebinkies can be found. It is a must for everybody who's into live music.

Time to blow the whistle!

Music is a matter of taste. Some follow the mainstream whereas others are more into the independent music culture. Whistlebinkies though, offers a wide range of music genres. There is live music every single night. Visitors can enjoy live gigs without charge apart from Friday and Saturday - free entry before midnight only. Some people just stop by and have a drink or two. Sunday

to Thursday, four live bands perform every single evening until 3am whereas Friday and Saturday, there may be up to six live gigs per night. Everybody has the opportunity to perform in an open mic night session taking place each Monday from 9pm to 3am. Especially on Tuesday, Whistlebinkies often gets quite crowded due to the fact that

four bands are invited to feature their own songs. This is the day when the stage becomes a showcase. It is the day for musicians making the most of the chance of being spotted and rated as the next upcoming idols. Music agents and managers even sneak in and mingle amongst the audience.

Not only does the music mix cover rock, pop, indie, alternative and R&B, but it also includes traditional folk tunes. The audience is widely mixed, too. *LIVE MUSIC EVERY NIGHT* Whistlebinkies attracts locals, tourists, students, groups, couples as well as singles moving to the music. It is a pub where all generations come together and enjoy the special atmosphere of the place in their own way.

Leather benches and wine barrels for tables create its charm and cosy atmosphere. "Why does it always rain on me? Is it because I lied when I was seventeen?" comes from the lyrics by

