

Key Information

This section aims to provide you with details of all the nuts-and-bolts facilities on offer in the city to allow your visit to run smoothly and to enable you to let the folks back home know what an amazing city Edinburgh is!

Climate

Scotland's position on the edge of the European continent with sea on three sides means that the weather is very varied. Records show that May and June are usually drier than July and August.



Edinburgh's annual rainfall is only slightly greater than London's and many of the east coast towns have less annual rainfall than Rome.

Generally speaking, the east coast tends to be cool and dry, the west coast milder and wetter. July and August are normally the warmest months, average temperature of 15-19oC/60-68oF.

Banks and Currency Exchange

Currency

Scottish banks issue their own bank notes in all denominations. These differ in design from English notes, but are of the same value and are accepted elsewhere in the UK (although you are best to change £1 notes for £1 coins before you leave Scotland). English notes are accepted in Scotland. In Scotland, banks usually give the best exchange rate for foreign currency, and many offer this service. It is also possible to change money in airports, larger rail stations, travel agents and some of the larger hotels (if you are a resident); there is usually a handling fee and commission. Most towns and cities have cash machines where you can obtain British Currency using your cashcard or credit card. Some establishments may accept Euro traveller cheques.

Credit Cards

Main stores, hotels and restaurants in Scotland will accept the majority of credit cards. It is advisable to carry some £ Sterling; for example, many smaller accommodation establishments such as B&Bs are unlikely to accept credit cards; this also applies to other small businesses.

Tax Refunds

Value Added Tax (VAT) at 17.5% is applied to goods and services. Non-EU visitors to Scotland can reclaim it on goods only, by using the Foreign Exchange Tax Free Shopping arrangements. You can reclaim VAT at participating stores. A Tax Free Shopping form is obtained and completed at the

shop where you must also show your passport. The form has to be presented to HM Customs and Excise, as you leave the UK.

Banks and Cash Dispensers

There are branches of all major Scottish banks across the city. In central Edinburgh, those with cash dispensers (ATMs) are:

- **Bank of Scotland**
Canongate, Chambers St, George St, The Mound (head office), 141 Princes St, 38 St Andrews Sq, Shandwick Pl
- **Royal Bank of Scotland**
George St, North Bridge, Princes St, St Andrews Sq
- **Clydesdale Bank**
29 George St, Hanover St, North Bridge.

The major English clearing banks also all have branches in the city, and are open on weekdays only (phone for opening times):

- **Barclays**
1 St Andrew Sq (t: 0845-600 0180)
- **Lloyds/ TSB**
113 George St (t: 0131-226 4021)
- **HSBC**
76 Hanover St (t: 0131-465 3200)
- **NatWest**
80 George St (t: 0131-226 6181)

Currency Exchange

There are currency exchange bureaux in the Tourist Information Centre office at 3 Princes St (above Princes Mall; open Mon-Sat 9.00 am - 8.00 pm) and also at Waverley train station in the accommodation kiosk.

Outwith office hours, a number of the more upmarket hotels offer an exchange facility although their commission rate is likely to be much higher than normal high-street rates.

Customs & Duty Free

Travelling Within the European Union

You do not have to pay any tax or duty in the UK on goods you have bought tax paid in other EU countries which are for your own use, and which have been transported to the UK by you. 'Own use' includes goods which are for your own consumption and gifts. You cannot bring back goods for payment, even payment in kind, or for re-sale. These goods would then be regarded as held for a commercial purpose.

If the Officer is satisfied the goods are being brought into the UK for a commercial purpose, and are not for own use, the goods, along with any vehicle used to transport them, will be liable to seizure and may not be returned. For serious offences you could also be liable to imprisonment, heavy fines or driving disqualification.

Travelling From Outside the European Union

You are entitled to an allowance of goods only if you travel with the goods and do not plan to sell them.

Worship

In Scotland, people of many different religions, denominations and beliefs co-exist. The most widely practised faith in Scotland is Christianity, of which the most common denomination is Presbyterianism (represented by the Church of Scotland). Your nearest place of worship can be obtained from the appropriate contact point listed below:

- Baptist Union of Scotland, 14 Aytoun Road, Glasgow, G41 5RT Tel: 0141 423 6169 E-mail: admin@scottishbaptist.org.uk
- Catholic Church, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH Tel: 0141 221 1168 Fax: 0141 204 2458
- Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 Tel: 0131 225 5722 Fax: 0131 220 3113
- Edinburgh Buddhist Centre, 10 Viewforth, Edinburgh EH10 4JF Tel: 0131 228 3333
- Glasgow Buddhist Centre, 329 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3HW Tel: 0141 333 0524
- Hindu Mandir & Cultural Centre, Contact: Mr Lal Tel: 0131 667 6064
- Jehovah's Witnesses, 10 Pennywell Road, Edinburgh EH4 Tel: 0131 343 3005
- Jewish Synagogue & Community Centre, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh EH16 5AB Tel: 0131 667 3144
- Scottish Episcopal Church, General Senate Office, 21 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EE Tel: 0131 225 6357 Fax: 0131 346 7247
- The Salvation Army, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN Tel: 0845 634 0101 (UK). +44 (0)20 7367 4500 (overseas).
- Sikh Temple, 1 Sheriff Brae, Edinburgh EH6 6ZZ Tel: 0131 553 7207 Contact: Ragbir Singh (Vice President) Mobile no: 0777 994848
- UK Islamic Mission, 19 Carrington Street, Glasgow G4 9AJ Tel: 0141 331 1119 or 0141 333 9105

Health

Holidaymakers who become ill while in Scotland are eligible for free emergency treatment at National Health Service Accident and Emergency hospital departments. As with all travel it is advised to take out insurance cover before travelling. This applies for European Community and other travellers. Your travel agent can give advice.

You do not need any vaccinations before you come to Scotland

Emergency Contacts

The following contacts can be used in the unfortunate event that you need to contact the emergency services during your stay.

Hospital

For urgent treatment, The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Little France, Old Dalkeith Road (t: 0131-536 1000) has an Accident and Emergency Department. Babies and children up to age 13 can also be taken to The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, 9 Sciennes Road (t: 0131-536 0000)

For minor injuries such as sprains, cuts, bites or minor burns, the Western General Hospital, Crewe Road (t: 0131-537 1330) has a walk-in service available every day of the week, all year round, from 9.00 am - 9.00 pm.

Dentist

An emergency service for the relief of pain only is available at the Casualty Department of the Edinburgh Dental Institute, Lauriston Place (t: 0131-536 4958) on weekdays from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm. In the evenings (7.00 pm to 9.00 pm) or at weekends (10.00 am to 12.00 am), an emergency clinic operates at the Western General Hospital, Crewe Rd (t: 0131-537 1338). You will be charged the standard NHS rate for all treatment you receive, whichever emergency clinic you attend, so please remember to take a means of payment with you.

Pharmacy

There are no 24-hour chemists or pharmacies in Edinburgh. Boots, 48 Shandwick Place has the longest opening hours (Monday - Friday 8.00 am - 9.00 pm, Sat. 8.00 am - 7.00 pm, Sun. 10.00 am - 5.00 pm; t: 0131/225 6757) .

Police

In an emergency, call 999. Otherwise, Lothian and Borders Police operate an information centre in central Edinburgh at 188 High Street (t: 0131-226 6966) or you can contact any of the following local police stations:

- 14 St. Leonards Street, St Leonards (t: 0131-662 5000)
- 2 Gayfield Square (t: 0131-556 9270)
- 9 Howden Hall Road (t: 0131-666 2222)
- 3-5 Torphicen Place, West End (t: 0131-229 2323)
- 49 Dumbryden Drive, Wester Hailes (t: 0131-442 2626)
- 28 Meadowplace Road, Corstorphine (t: 0131-334 4900)
- 270 Oxbgangs Road North (t: 0131-441 1518)
- 15 Bridge Road, Balerno (t: 0131-449 5991)
- Edinburgh Airport (t: 0131-333 2724)
- Queen Charlotte Street, Leith (t: 0131-554 9350)
- 118 Portobello High Street (t: 0131-669 0581)
- 161 Duddingston Road West, Craigmillar (t: 0131-661 3362)
- 701 Ferry Road, Drylaw Mains (t: 0131-343 3171)
- 13 Hopetoun Road, South Queensferry (t: 0131-331 1798)

In an emergency for:

- Police
- Ambulance
- Fire
- Coastguard

Call 999

Disability

VisitScotland welcomes visitors with disabilities and operates an inspection scheme to assess accommodation offering disabled provision using the UK-wide National Accessible Standards. These form three categories of accessibility:



Unassisted wheelchair access



Assisted wheelchair access



Access for visitors with mobility difficulties

Establishments are recognised in this way by the appropriate access symbol in brochures. Many establishments will be able to cater for those with a sensory impairment but please do check with the proprietor before booking.

Capability Scotland is Scotland's largest disability organisation and provides a national advice and information service. For further information on their services, please contact:

Advice Service Capability Scotland (ASCS) 11 Ellersly Road, Edinburgh EH12 6HY Tel: +44 131 313 5510 Fax: +44 131 346 1681 Textphone: +44 131 346 2529 e-mail: ascscapability-scotland.org.uk
www.capability-scotland.org.uk

Holiday Care is a national charity and the UK's central source of holiday and travel information and support for disabled people and their carers. For further information on their services please contact:

Holiday Care, 7th Floor, Sunley House, 4 Bedford Park, Croydon, Surrey CR0 2AP Tel: 0845 124 9971(UK) +44 208 760 0072 (outside UK) Fax: 0845 124 9972, Minicom: 0845 124 9976. e-mail: info@holidaycare.org
www.holidaycare.org.uk

Smoking

It is against the law to smoke in the majority of Scotland's indoor public places, including pubs, restaurants and cafes, most public buildings in Scotland, within airports and on most forms of public transport. The new regulations came into force on 26th March 2006 and are intended to create a healthier and fresher environment for residents and visitors to our beautiful country.

The law also affects accommodation establishments. All enclosed public areas of hotels, boarding houses, guest houses, inns and hostels such as bars, lounges, restaurants, reception and lobby areas, etc. are included in the smoke-free ruling and smoking is not permitted in these public areas. However, some establishments have designated dedicated bedrooms where smoking is allowed, and if these are required, you should contact the property directly to check if they offer this facility.

Further information on the new legislation can be found on at www.clearingtheairscotland.com.

Language

As in the rest of the UK, English is the official language of Scotland. There are marked regional accents but all are distinctively Scottish.

Gaelic is still spoken in parts of the western Highlands and in the Outer Hebrides, with English as a second language.