



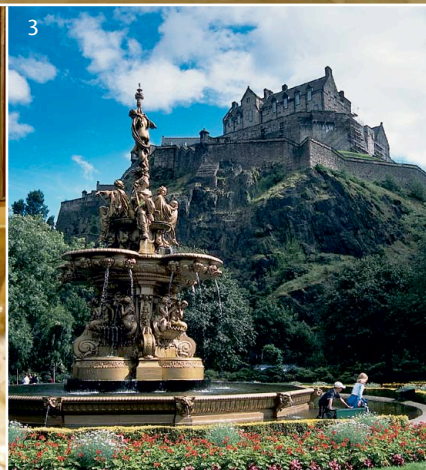


#### WHEN TO GO

The Edinburgh International Film Festival will be staged from June 15 - 26, 2011. The popular comedy festival is part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which will be staged in 2011 from August 5th to August 29th.

The biggest factor influencing travel to Scotland is weather. High season is the month of August which is during the northern hemisphere summer. The temperature is around 20 degrees. During the low season, which is the rest of the year, the weather is cold however, there is less rainfall than in summer. It doesn't often snow during winter in Scotland and winter temperatures hover around five degrees.

- 1 The Balmoral lobby
- 2 The Balmoral's Number One restaurant
- 3 Princess Street Gardens
- 4 Balmoral bathroom
- 5 Museum of Scotland
- 6 Superior Deluxe Room
- 7 Shopping in Edinburgh



The dramatic natural setting and calibre of its period architecture combine to make Edinburgh one of Europe's most beautiful cities, a fact recognised by a UNESCO World Heritage listing in 1995. It was established as Scotland's capital in 1492 by King James IV but Edinburgh's lineage as a royal city dates back to the 12th century when the first of the castle enclaves that dominate the city's skyline was erected.

As a major centre of the Scottish enlightenment, Edinburgh was once called "the Athens of the North." It's now also known affectionately as "Auld Reekie" (Scots for old smoky).

In the words of one of Scotland's most famous authors Robert Louis Stevenson, Edinburgh is "a dream in masonry and living rock." It also displays a darker side, having inspired his fictitious character Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Scottish author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Scottish historical novelist and poet Sir

Walter Scott were both also former residents of the city. Popular Scottish crime writer Ian Rankin (author of the famous Inspector Rebus novels) is an Edinburgh local today and popular children's fiction writer JK Rowling, who lives in a small castle outside Edinburgh, completed the last installment in her acclaimed series *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* in suite 552 of the famous Balmoral Hotel, which is our suggestion for where to stay in the chic city of Edinburgh.

#### WHERE TO STAY

Built in 1902, the five-star grand-scaled Victorian Balmoral Hotel is situated at the east end of the Princess Street Gardens, adjacent to the main shopping district. Affectionately referred to as the Dame, the Balmoral Hotel contains 188 rooms and 20 generous suites, many with captivating views of Edinburgh Castle and the Old Town. The hotel's appointments and decor exude understated elegance. Furnishings are in

subtle hues reminiscent of Scottish moors, mists and heathers, accented by antiques and sumptuous fabric flourishes.

The Balmoral Hotel regularly features in award winning travel lists and is renowned for its service, which includes a concierge staff of twenty who busy themselves arranging "anything for everybody." Bespoke services include curbside check-in, VIP personal shopping, access to distilleries and guaranteed tee-times at one of many nearby golf courses. Balmoral Hotel, 1 Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 2EQ, Scotland [www.thebalmoralhotel.com](http://www.thebalmoralhotel.com)  
**Rates:** Standard room from A\$530 per night, Classic Suite from A\$1,165 per night, Royal Suite from A\$2,375 per night. Balmoral Hotel is a luxury property member of The Rocco Forte Collection.

#### WHAT TO DO

Edinburgh's picturesque historic centre invites

an easy day's stroll. The city boasts important historic collections of art and cultural heritage, and aside from the Castle exhibits, including the Crown Jewels, it's well worth taking time out to explore the Museum of Scotland in the Old Town and the National Gallery.

Nearby Balmoral Hotel the Princess Street Gardens, a vast swathe of green that divides the Old Town from the New, is a favourite meeting place for locals and an ideal spot for footworn flaneurs to rest a while on benches that offer spectacular views of the castle and the many multi-storey houses that cling to the hillsides.

The city hosts acclaimed international film and comedy festivals every year, which are usually complemented by colourful fringe events that tend to attract controversy.

For those attracted to the dark side of the coal-smoke choked 17th century city, one can tour supposedly haunted subterranean passages and underground vaults, and then surface for a brew in one of the city's many pubs.

For visitors wanting to head out and travel the proverbial high roads, the Balmoral Hotel's Michelin-starred Number One restaurant offers a range of Posh Picnics, with perfect packages for hilltop lookout locales such as Rosslyn Chapel or Arthur's Seat, or a luxury hamper for the drive to historic St Andrews, the golf Mecca of Scotland.

The game of golf purportedly originated in Scotland from local shepherds in the 13th century; now its birthplace attracts millionaires. The two-hour trip along the coast offers ample opportunity for scenic pit-stops in quaint Fife fishing villages such as Crail, or the grounds of stately National Trust properties such as Falkland, the Renaissance hunting palace of the Stuart kings at Kirkcaldy.

#### WHERE TO EAT

When it comes to fine dining in Edinburgh one is actually spoiled for choice. Comedy festival haggis and black pudding jokes

aside, gourmet cuisine is readily available, and five restaurants have now made their marks with Michelin star ratings; the greatest concentration in the UK outside London. The Balmoral Hotel has one of them, the landmark one Michelin starred Number One restaurant. Number One's award winning menu is a seamless blend of local ingredients and French flare, with delicacies such as 'west coast scallops, broccoli puree', escabeche of oyster, and hazelnut velouté'. The dining room's golden velvet banquet and rich, red lacquer walls create a warm and inviting ambience.

New kid on the block, 21212, won best new restaurant in the UK in 2009. (3 Royal Terrace

Edinburgh EH7 5AB). Edinburgh's other Michelin starred restaurants are The Kitchin, Edinburgh (78 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6LX); Martin Wishart, Edinburgh (54 Shore Edinburgh, City of Edinburgh EH6 6RA) and Plumed Horse, Edinburgh (50-54 Henderson Street, Edinburgh EH6 6DE). ■