

# Commentary... August in Edinburgh

By Mac Hay  
Guest Columnist

You booked your flight and accommodations; you made the trip. You are in Edinburgh, Scotland!

Now what? How to get around? What to see and do?

You have either flown into Edinburgh, or you took the train from London; let's get going.

If you are in the Waverley train station, or close to it, look for a mobile (cell) phone store and get either a sim card for your phone or a disposable British (Scottish) phone. Look for a TRAVELSHOP or bus ticket shop and purchase a CITYSMART bus ticket ([www.lothianbuses.com](http://www.lothianbuses.com)), a 10-trip ticket will get you started; you can always top it off on any bus if you need to.

After you are settled look for the Hop On-Hop Off bus tour of the city ([www.edinburghstour.com](http://www.edinburghstour.com)). Waverley Bridge is the starting point, the tour will provide a great overview of the city.

The main three festivals in August are the Edinburgh International Book Festival, August 13-29 ([www.edbookfest.co.uk](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk)); the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, August 5-27 ([www.edintattoo.co.uk](http://www.edintattoo.co.uk)); and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, August 5-29 ([www.edfringe.com](http://www.edfringe.com)).

I am attending all three — a total of 21 events in my 10 days in Edinburgh!

The Book Festival, the largest in the world, hosts 800 authors and speakers; the Fringe has 54,000 performances, dance,

comedy, theatre, speakers — the works! The Tattoo, in front of the famous Edinburgh Castle, honors the Queen's 90th birthday along with military bands, pipers, drummers, the whole lineup for your musical enjoyment.

Here are a few popular sights to consider:

### Old Town Edinburgh

Edinburgh's Old Town is a labyrinth of cobbled streets, narrow alleyways and hidden courtyards, all well preserved and steeped in the city's history. At its center is the Royal Mile, a remarkable street leading from the seat of Edinburgh Castle on Castle Rock down to the grandiose Palace of Holyroodhouse.

St. Giles' Cathedral boasts a magnificent vaulted ceiling and ornate tombs. Delving below-ground, a tour of Edinburgh's vaults reveal a subterranean world of forgotten chambers that once housed the city's poor.

### New Town Edinburgh

Inspired by the Scottish Enlightenment, the neat and ordered grid of the New Town provides an elegant contrast to the labyrinthine design of the Old Town. Its broad streets boast spectacular neoclassical and Georgian architecture, with a wealth of beautiful buildings perfectly preserved since their construction in the 18th and 19th centuries.

### The Royal Botanic Garden

The Royal Botanic Garden was founded in the 17th century as a physic garden. It contains over four gardens boasting a rich living collection of plants and is a

world-renowned center for plant science and education.

### The Scotch Whisky Experience

The Amber Whisky Bar continues the mission of the must-see Edinburgh attraction to inform and impassion people about Scotch Whisky.

### Edinburgh Castle

The castle has dominated the skyline for centuries. See the Crown Jewels, smell the gunpowder after the One o'Clock Gun fires, see the Great Hall display of arms and armor, the Royal Palace, St Margaret's Chapel, the Scottish National War Memorial, the National War Museum of Scotland — and individual regimental museums and, most of all, panoramic views across the capital!

### Scotland's People Centre

The General Register House, on Princes Street and behind it on West Register Street, the New Register House, both have user-friendly repositories of Scottish people's past. Check out your Scottish ancestry; the free two-hour session is a stimulating introduction. You will receive excellent instruction and assistance from the staff.

### The National Museum Of Scotland

The National Museum is one of Scotland's most popular attractions. Collections include national archaeological and medieval artifacts, displays on natural history, geology, art, science and technology. This interactive museum



PHOTO BY MAC HAY

New Town Edinburgh.

has plenty to keep everyone occupied. The Scottish galleries also document how the lives of everyday Scots have changed over the centuries.

### The Scottish National Gallery

The Scottish National Gallery and the adjoining Royal Scottish Academy form a complex in the heart of Edinburgh, just off Princes Street. The Gallery houses an impressive collection of fine art, from the early renaissance to the end of the 19th century, with works of the Impressionists, and a collection from van Gogh, Cezanne and Degas. The Academy showcases artworks and architecture from Scotland and around the world.

### Golf

You are in a region favored by many golfers. There are numerous local courses: Muirfield, recognized as one of the oldest golf clubs in the world, dating back to 1744, Dunbar, Craighelaw, Royal Burgess and Bruntsfield Links are just a few of the standouts that lie within the confines of the capital.

### Eating in Edinburgh

The Scottish capital is famous for its culinary traditions, such as kippers, haggis and whisky; but there's so much more for food lovers to enjoy on a visit to "Auld Reekie." Foodie walking tours, Michelin-starred restaurants, markets and speciality shops showcase the rich variety of artisan products the city has to offer.

It's my greatest wish that you are now fully charged up to make the trip to Edinburgh, Scotland! August is my favorite time, but, really, any time you go will be a rewarding visit to a city that prides itself in giving her visitors — you — the best time possible. To quote an old, broadly used Scottish saying: "wouldn't it be a grand thing now if you were coming instead of going."

You will hear from me in August when I'm in Edinburgh. I'll give you an American/Scot's eye view of the City, the events, sights and most importantly — it's people.

Slàinte!

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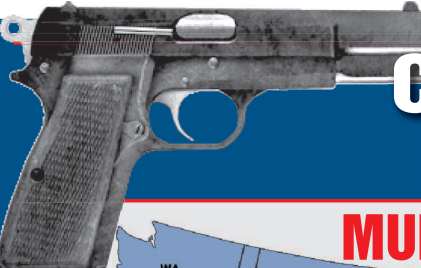
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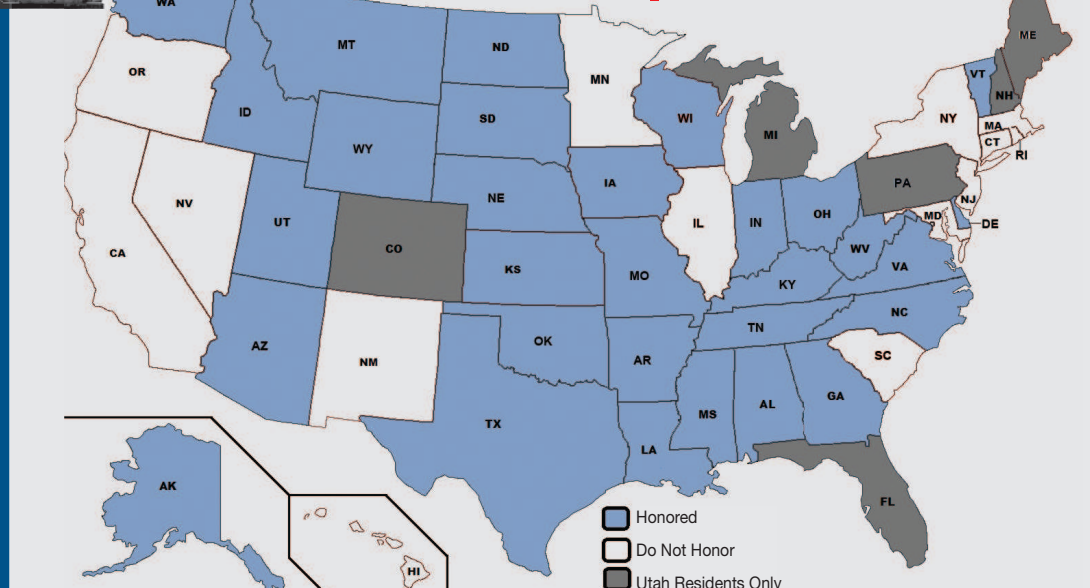
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**Thurs., Aug. 11**  
**1 p.m. & 6 p.m.**

Shilo Inn: 3105 OB Riley Rd., Bend  
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