

Edinburgh Glasgow

Scotland's largest cities both make for a fantastic summer break. But which is best for you?



Edinburgh

What to see

It's all about history in Scotland's capital. Divide your time between the medieval old town and the neoclassical new town (itself 300 years old), both recognised on Unesco's World Heritage list. Edinburgh Castle is the city's most memorable landmark and most visited attraction – allow at least half a day (adults £17; edinburghcastle.gov.uk). The free self-guided Edinburgh Heritage Food Trail (ewht.org.uk/visit/edinburghfoodheritagetrail) entertainingly combines food and history as you stroll through both halves of the picturesque city centre. By night, Mary King's Close (adults £14.75, realmarykingsclose.com) offers spine chilling ghost tours.

Where to stay

The Old Town Chambers offers one of the city's most impressive new places to stay, with luxurious studios and apartments in the heart of the old town. Studios from £180, lateralcity.com/old-town-chambers.

Where to eat

Book a table for dinner with a castle view at Cannonball (five course tasting menu £50, contini.com/contini-cannonball), run by the Contini family. For the classiest lunch in town, dine in the shadow of the British monarchy with a champagne lunch or afternoon tea aboard the Queen's former home-from-home, the Royal Yacht Britannia (£15.50 entry, royalyachtbritannia.co.uk). You'll be in good company enjoying coffee and cake at the Elephant House (elephanthouse.biz) – it's where J K Rowling penned her first Harry Potter novel.

Shop

Princes Street is the place for high street shops, and George Street is home to upmarket fashion stores housed in

'Dine in the shadow of the British monarchy'



graceful Georgian buildings. Harvey Nichols (harveynichols.com/store/edinburgh) is the landmark store on the fashion hub of Multrees Walk (multreeswalk.co.uk). For independent shops, delis and cute markets, wander north downhill to the riverside suburb of Stockbridge.

Book it

EasyJet (easyjet.com) offers flights from London Stansted, Luton and Gatwick, Bristol and Belfast airports with prices from £30.99pp one way based on two travelling.

The verdict

Arguably Edinburgh is the UK's most handsome city and it wears its rich royal history on its dramatic architectural sleeve, but also boasts plenty of excellent restaurants.



Glasgow

What to see

Glasgow offers a beguiling mix of the historic and the ultra modern. A bus tour is the best way to get a feel for Scotland's largest city – they leave from George Square (adults £14, citysightseeingglasgow.co.uk). The striking Riverside Museum (free entry, glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/riverside) explores the city's rich shipbuilding heritage. The nightlife here is legendary. The SSE Hydro (thessehydro.com) has become one of Europe's most successful concert venues since opening in 2013 while the nearby gin bar The Finnieston (thefinniestonbar.com) is superb and does great local seafood.

Stay

Hotel du Vin at One Devonshire Gardens (doubles from £119, hotelduvin.com/locations/glasgow) is the city's most



Braised ox cheek at Ox And Finch



Take in remarkable architecture



refined bolthole in the stately west end, with a concierge who really knows the city.

Eat

Glasgow may not boast Edinburgh's quartet of Michelin star restaurants, but sound provenance and good value abound. Ox And Finch (plates from £6, oxandfinch.com) is the place for a fabulous dinner. For lunch, Café Gandolfi (mains from £9.50, cafegandolfi.com) in the plush Merchant City area tempts with superb coffee and pan fried scallops.

Shop

The 'Style Mile' sweeps all the way from the Buchanan Galleries mall (buchanangalleries.co.uk) at the top of Buchanan Street down to Debenhams on Argyle Street. Independent shops and interesting boutiques can be found on Byres Road. Finnieston's



Hidden Lane (facebook.com/TheHiddenLane) boasts galleries and studios, and in the Merchant City, you'll find Chouchou Couture (chouchoucouture.com), where Italian designer Silvia Pellegrino has given the hoodie an elegant makeover.

Book it

The Caledonian Sleeper offers leisurely overnight train travel from London Euston. Women travelling first class can have their own cabin from £130 return, sleeper.scot.

The verdict

While Glasgow doesn't have the Disney good looks of Edinburgh, it rewards visitors with the finest shopping and nightlife. Ideal for families with older kids and couples looking for a livelier city break.