

• **Distance** 9½ km/6 miles • **Time** 3hrs+ • **Type** City tour

1 NAVIGATION LEVEL 1 **1** FITNESS LEVEL 1



Plan your walk



WHERE: Circular tour of Edinburgh city centre.

START: National Gallery, The Mound (NT255738).

END: The Castle (NT253735).

TERRAIN: Mostly level pavements throughout but with rough footpaths on two ascents.

MAPS: OS Explorer 350; Landranger 66.

GETTING THERE: Regular trains from all over Britain arrive at nearby Edinburgh Waverley (☎ 0845 7484950, www.trainline.co.uk).

EATING & DRINKING: There are hundreds of excellent places to choose from, but a favourite is the Elephant House on George IV Bridge (☎ 0131 220 5355, www.elephanthouse.biz) with its great view of the castle.

SLEEPING: There's a good range of budget hotels and the SYHA Edinburgh Central for cost-conscious visitors (contact the TIC below for more details).

VISITOR INFORMATION: TIC between Waverley station and



PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAMY

Edinburgh, said Robert Louis Stevenson, is 'a profusion of eccentricities, a dream in masonry and living rock.' You can see what he means: the formal New Town below the precipice of the Old; a maze of closes and vennels and snug howffs just a few minutes' walk from the wild volcanic outcrop of Arthur's Seat; palace and parliament opposite each other; water, crags and distant mountains all within view. For centuries in the Old Town, rich and poor rubbed shoulders. In the 1790s the rich built their New Town to the north, filling in Nor Loch (now Princess Gardens) and building bridges to the Old Town. Long before then in the Old Town, new streets were laid on top of old and the city's poorest went underground to live in vaults. **New and Old, above and below: Edinburgh truly is a city for walking.**

1. START From the National Gallery, cross Princes Street (with the castle behind you) and walk north into Hanover Street. Turn R into

Queen Street - the longest stretch of New Town architecture in the city, designed to complement Princes Street. Princes Street was commercial before it was finished, but Queen Street was residential and much superior. At the end, in Picardy Place, look for a giant foot by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, the Leith-born sculptor. Turn L onto Leith Walk and R into London Road then look for a path on the R up through trees. Cross the road at the top (Royal Terrace) and carry on up the path to the L side of Greenside Church.

2. Zig-zag up to the top of Calton Hill to see an imitation acropolis, an observatory and two memorials (one to a famous sailor, the other for an almost unknown academic). The acropolis commemorates the dead of Napoleonic wars and was known, due to its half-finished look, as 'Scotland's Disgrace'.

The observatory is part-serious, part-theme park, and at Nelson's monument at one o'clock a big ball is dropped - marking time for ships

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the National Gallery on Princes Street (☎ 0845 22 55 121, www.edinburgh.org).

GUIDEBOOKS: *Edinburgh* by Neil Wilson (£11.99, Lonely Planet, ISBN 978 1740598309); *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes* by Robert Louis Stevenson (£7.99, Pallas Athene Arts, ISBN 978 1873429761).

LOCAL RAMBLERS AREA/ GROUP: Edinburgh Ramblers (☎ 0131 447 8339, www.lothian-borders-ramblers.org.uk/Edinburgh.htm).

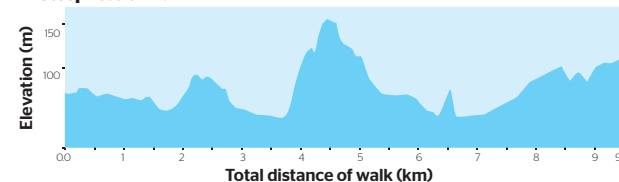
on the Firth. Pay £3 and climb 143 steps to the top for an amazing view.

3. From Nelson's monument, take the steps downhill towards the Old Town and at the bottom turn L along Regent Road. After passing over the railway, in a couple of minutes there are steps going off R, downhill to Calton Road. Turn L (east) and you'll come to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen's residence in Scotland. It was here that Mary Queen of Scots reigned briefly and saw Rizzio - her loyal secretary - murdered by her husband Darnley.

4. Leave Holyrood on your L, cross the road from the car park and walk up some steps. Turn R onto the Radical Road (a path) for Salisbury Crags (172m/567ft) and then up to Arthur's Seat (251m/823ft) to see the Lothian coast, Lammermuir and Pentland Hills, the Firth of Forth and the Fife coast. In 1836, 17 miniature coffins were dug up here. No-one knows what they were for. From here turn north and descend on a path back to Holyrood. The Scottish Parliament building marks the start of the Royal Mile which finishes at the castle. Tours are excellent, or walk in to see the exhibition and the public spaces. Parliament sits Wednesdays and Thursdays.



Steepest of walk



5. Leave Parliament and walk up Canongate - the Royal Mile. An overhanging clock marks Canongate Tolbooth - the oldest building on Canongate and now The People's Story museum. Further up, overhanging gables and stairs mark John Knox's house. Now you'll pass South Bridge. Here, underground tours explore the Old Town's once-inhabited vaults. Along one such tunnel Burke and Hare carried corpses to the dissection rooms of the old Medical School, Nicholson Street. John Knox stands outside St Giles', spitting Protestant fire from a building shorn of decoration.

6. Turn L on to George IV Bridge, past the National Library to the beautiful modern Museum of Scotland and - opposite - Greyfriars Kirk and kirkyard where, in 1679, 1,200 Covenantors (the Scottish church rebels) were imprisoned and some buried. The Museum of Scotland is next to the Royal Museum - both are great.

7. Retrace your steps and turn L into the last bit of the Royal Mile. Look for a little fountain - between 1480 and 1722, 300 women were burned as witches here. Finish at the castle. The great hall is terrific and the Stone of Destiny was finally returned here in 1996 - 900 years after the English took it.

Route devised by Stephen Morris



Route and gradient profile created using Anquet Maps v06. Download more maps from www.Anquet.co.uk