

# DALMAHOY

## A MARRIOTT® HOTEL & COUNTRY CLUB

### Sightseeing

#### **TOUR 1: Edinburgh's New Town**

This tour takes you around Edinburgh's New Town. Designed by James Craig, the area is a tribute to the Georgian age and architectural elegance. To enable its construction, the North Bridge was erected 1763-1772 and the Nor' Loch was drained. Now a park, the latter will feature towards the end of the tour, when you need a rest! But first we'll go to the heart of New Town and the 'big 3' — Princes Street, George Street and Queen Street.

This tour begins on Queen Street, the most northern of the three. This street is extremely well preserved and offers excellent views towards Fife. Start at the western end of Queen Street and walk along Queen Street Gardens, which form the street's northern edge, towards Charlotte Square. Designed by Robert Adam in 1791, this was, at the time, the most fashionable place to live in the city. Named after George III's wife Queen Charlotte, the square is home to West Register House, housed in the church of St George. With an attractive exterior, which is simpler than originally intended due to limited funds, it is certainly worth a peek. The exhibitions here change fairly frequently, so pick up a leaflet about current shows. Next, check out Edinburgh's most prestigious address, the Georgian House, on the northern side of the square. No.6 is the official home of Scotland's Secretary of State, whilst No.7 is open to the public. Step inside and see what it probably looked like under its first owner — the head of the Lamont clan.

Once you've tasted Georgian upper class life, turn into Young Street and see where the ordinary people lived. This narrow street perfectly illustrates the ordered design of New Town. At the end of Young Street, turn right onto George Street, the axis of the three main streets. This is Edinburgh's financial centre so banks are a common feature. Wander along here and turn right down Frederick Street, then take the first left into Rose Street. This runs parallel to George Street and is a pedestrian haven of attractive cafés and small shops. Stop here for a bite to eat and watch the passers-by. After lunch, follow this street to its end and turn left into St Andrew Square, at the eastern end of George Street.

Standing 41 meters tall in the middle of the square is the Melville Monument, a statue of Lord Melville, an 18th century politician. The square is also home to the Royal Bank of Scotland's HQ. This former mansion was built for Sir Laurence Dundas on the site originally intended for the church. Note the private lawn — a rare sight in New Town. Have a look at the 19th century domed Telling Room inside. Next-door is the former British Linen Bank.

Now turn into West Register Street and walk past Café Royal Oyster Bar. Pop inside this fashionable oyster bar if you fancy a drink/snack or just to catch a glimpse of the murals. Head south past General Register House, noting, along the way, the statue of the Duke of Wellington. Look east towards Calton Hill and the Nelson Monument.

You should now find yourself at the eastern end of Princes Street, the busiest street of New Town and a shopper's paradise. On the left you have North Bridge, which leads up to the Royal Mile and Old Town. Also in this area are Waverley Station and Waverley Market. Wander down Princes Street and use this opportunity to indulge in a spot of retail therapy. Don't miss Jenners — the oldest privately owned department store in the world! If the bustle of the street seems unappealing, step down into Princes Street Gardens and stroll westwards.

Next stop is The Mound. Home of the National Gallery of Scotland and the Royal Scottish Academy, both designed by William Playfair, this is culture time! Choose the one that most appeals or if you don't fancy an exhibition, simply admire the 19th century architecture. Note the statue of Queen Victoria that crowns the Royal Scottish Academy. It was moved up there on the orders of the Queen herself, who thought she looked too chubby close-up!

If your shopping craving is not yet sated, wander down the rest of Princes Street before returning to the Princes Street Gardens, the final point on this tour. Rest your weary legs here and treat yourself to an ice-cream in the garden cafe. This spot is an excellent place to appreciate Edinburgh's uneven terrain. Look up to Edinburgh Castle on its rocky crag, and then right to New Town and the places you've just seen. Savour this sight of wonderful contrasts — unlike any other city in Britain.

## **TOUR 2: Calton Hill to Castlehill - A Tour of Edinburgh's Monumental Views**

As you may have guessed from the title, this tour involves a fair amount of uphill and downhill, so make sure you wear comfy shoes. Edinburgh's uneven landscape is one of its most beautiful and unusual aspects; the heights of Calton Hill and Castlehill contrast with the depths of Cowgate to give the city a roller-coaster feel. Designed to give you a flavour of this, the tour does involve plenty of walking but don't worry, it's not all hard work — shops and coffee-stops are a very important part of the route.

The tour starts north-east of Princes Street, at Edinburgh Playhouse Theatre in Greenside Place. This theatre usually shows popular touring musicals and with three thousand seats, it used to be the largest cinema in the city. Pop in and pick up a copy of their programme. Wander past the theatre into Blenheim Place, where a path will take you up some steps to Calton Hill and the highest point (in altitude!) of the tour.

At one hundred metres (333 feet) high, this volcanic hill offers fantastic views over Edinburgh. Since you can see Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh Castle, Holyroodhouse Palace, Princes Street and the New Town, it is in many ways the best place from which to view the city. Nothing is left out, so make sure you bring your camera to capture the panorama. The Hill offers much more than just wonderful views, however — on this outcrop there are several interesting buildings, dating from around the time of the Napoleonic wars.

First stop is the City Observatory, designed by Playfair in 1818 for his illustrious star-gazing uncle, John Playfair. The domed end houses The Edinburgh Experience, which will outline the city's history for you in a short 3D cinematic show. After this, admire the other end of the building - the Old Observatory — a rare example of James Craig's architecture. Walk over to the National Monument, the largest construction on the hill and a memorial to the Scots who died fighting in the Napoleonic wars. It was intended by Playfair to be a replica of the Parthenon but insufficient funds forced building to be cut short and only the west side of the Monument was completed. It's known affectionately locally as the 'Folly'. Just next to this memorial stands another — the Nelson Monument. Climb to the top and watch the views expand even further. Past this there is yet another monument, this time to a philosophy professor at Edinburgh University — the Monument to Dugald Stewart. This was also created by Playfair.

Once you've admired the monuments and absorbed the views, wander down the hill along Waterloo Place, where you will see the Royal High School. Dating from 1829, this Grecian building was designed by former pupil Thomas Hamilton, who is also responsible for the Burns Monument (1830) opposite. This too was modelled on an Athenian temple. Just next to this structure lies the Calton Burial Ground. Here again stands a memorial, this time commemorating Scots who died in the American civil war and crowned with a statue of Abraham Lincoln. At the eastern edge of the cemetery, old castellations betray the former presence of Calton Jail, once the city's main prison. Further down the hill you pass St Andrews House, which dates from the 1930s.

You should now be at the eastern end of Princes Street. Turn left onto the large North Bridge, which connects New Town with Old Town. Walk along the Bridge until you get to the High Street section of the Royal Mile. On the corner is Hunter Square — pop into the Old Town Information Centre housed in the Tron Kirk. If your stomach is rumbling, don't worry — lunch is not far off. The City Cafe on Blair Street offers refreshments in a cool and trendy atmosphere. If this is not your scene, stay on High Street where there are many eateries to choose from.

Once fed and rested, it's time for some leisure! If you continue down Blair Street, you'll find yourself in Cowgate, a popular night-time haunt for pub and club lovers. Buried beneath South and George IV Bridges, it is one of the lower points of the city and the darkest, most atmospheric places on this tour! Follow Cowgate westwards until it becomes a more spacious area — Grassmarket. As you wander around this former market, imagine the public hangings and brutal murders that it once nurtured. Happily, nothing that sinister remains and the restaurants, shops and cafés lend it a pleasant, animated feel. Fans of retro and vintage clothes will love it here, for it is a haven of second-hand shops. Take your time to stroll around and stop for a coffee at one of the attractive cafés. If you fancy something a little stronger, pop in the White Hart Inn, a favourite watering-hole of Robert Burns.

Leave Grassmarket via Victoria Street where you can indulge in a tad more retail therapy. Winding up to George IV Bridge, this charming street is lined with many excellent shops. Once on the Bridge, turn left and head towards the Royal Mile, where this tour ends. Standing on the corner of Parliament Square, you can look north down Bank Street, towards the New Town, west towards Edinburgh Castle and east towards Holyroodhouse Palace. If you walk up the Mile it will be easier to see. In fact, if you

fancy yet more views, try out the Camera Obscura on Castlehill. Once again you are on top of the city but this time south of Princes Street. Look east towards Calton Hill and see if you can pick out the different memorials!