



EDINBURGH, THE LOTHIAN, STIRLING, FORTH VALLEY AND THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Lying right on the Firth of Forth, **Edinburgh** is a coastal city. Venture beyond the city centre to explore the Port of Leith with its excellent bars and restaurants, or enjoy the beaches in areas such as Cramond or Portobello.

It's a city in which it's easy to get close to nature, especially along the famous Water of Leith walkway, or the small lochs adjacent to the famous Arthur's Seat.

Just a few minutes from Edinburgh, yet a million miles away, **East Lothian** was the childhood home of celebrated naturalist John Muir. The area has beautiful beaches and abundant wildlife - seabirds, seals, dolphins, and even the occasional minke whale or basking shark can be spotted here.

Engineering marvels can also be seen in these areas. In **Midlothian** you can board a barge and sail out onto the Union Canal, constructed over 200 years ago. When linked with the Forth and Clyde Canal, this provided the opportunity for the people of the time to traverse right across Scotland by barge.

Today, in nearby **Falkirk**, the impressive and unique Falkirk Wheel, the world's first revolving boat lift - carries boats between the two canals, using less power than it takes to boil a kettle of water! Be sure to make time to stop off to see The Kelpies, two giant equine sculptures which dominate the landscape.

The Forth Rail Bridge, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is an awe-inspiring example of Victorian engineering. Stop off in the charming West Lothian coastal town of **South Queensferry** to admire the view of it, plus the other two impressive bridges covering the expanse of the Firth of Forth.

Visit the city of **Stirling** to trace the path of the River Forth from one of the city's highest points such as Stirling Castle or the Abbey Craig. Further north, you will find the Lake of Menteith - the only 'lake' in Scotland, since all other similar waterways in Scotland are known as 'lochs'.

The **Scottish Borders** have a number of fascinating coastal nature reserves, where visitors can enjoy the unspoiled natural environment as well as spotting the rich and varied wildlife attracted to these areas. The region also has numerous sparkling rivers which offer unlimited opportunities to enjoy pursuits such as wildlife watching, cycling, walking and exploring the history of the surrounding areas.

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EDINBURGH



WATER OF LEITH

The Water of Leith is one of Edinburgh's hidden treasures. It flows for 24 miles from its source in the Pentland Hills, winding its way through the heart of some of the city's most fascinating neighbourhoods.

The Water of Leith Visitor Centre

outlines the history of this unique landmark.



DUDDINGSTON LOCH

At the foot of Arthur's Seat, the extinct volcano in the heart of Edinburgh, lies Holyrood Park, in the midst of which you will find Duddingston Loch, a fresh water loch rich in birdlife. It is the only natural loch in Edinburgh, and the largest in Holyrood Park. This area shows visitors a different aspect of the city.



CRAMOND / RIVER ALMOND

Cramond is a one of Edinburgh's best kept secrets and is a popular haunt with locals at weekends. It retains the character of its history as a fishing village, complete with a quaint row of whitewashed houses. It also has a small sandy beach, lovely walks along the banks of the River Almond and wonderful views across the Firth of Forth.



ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA

Although she was a famous sight as she carried the British Royal Family on a series of visits across the globe, the maritime origins of the Royal Yacht Britannia are firmly rooted in Scotland. The Yacht was built in Glasgow on the River Clyde and now lies at the Port of Leith in Edinburgh where visitors can explore both the crew quarters and Royal apartments.



THE SCOTCH WHISKY EXPERIENCE

Scotland's 'Water of Life' is celebrated at the Scotch Whisky Experience, right next to Edinburgh Castle. Step into a whisky barrel and set off on a journey of discovery through the rich history of whisky making traditions in Scotland. Choose from a variety of fascinating tasting sessions, and marvel at the world's largest whisky collection.

THE LOTHIANS



NORTH BERWICK / BASS ROCK

The lovely East Lothian town of North Berwick lies just 30 minutes drive from Edinburgh and is a wildlife haven. Off the coast is the famous Bass Rock, the world's largest Northern Gannet colony. Call in at the Scottish Seabird Centre to find out more about the area's abundant wildlife and take a boat trip out to spot seasonal wildlife including seals, puffins and more.



JOHN MUIR BIRTHPLACE

John Muir, the world famous conservationist, is known as the Father of the National Parks movement. Visit his birthplace in the East Lothian town of Dunbar where you can learn about his early life and see how the beauty of this area inspired his fierce love of the natural environment.



FORTH BRIDGES

The three Forth Bridges are an impressive sight as they span the Firth of Forth, providing transport links between The Lothians and Fife. The magnificent railway bridge was built between 1883 and 1890, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A number of companies offer cruises, enabling you to see the Bridges from the Firth itself.



UNION CANAL CRUISES

Created in 1822, the Union Canal runs between Edinburgh and Falkirk. A great way to experience it is by setting sail on a canal trip. You can charter a barge and crew with Reunion at Ratho or cruise to the Avon Viaduct from the Linlithgow Canal Centre



PRESTON MILL & PHANTASSIE DOOCOT

Step back in time and immerse yourself in the peaceful surroundings of this picturesque 16th Century water mill in an idyllic setting. See and hear the mill mechanisms in action and learn about the millers who worked here. Keep an eye out for otters, kingfishers and herons on the walk beside the river.

STIRLING & FORTH VALLEY



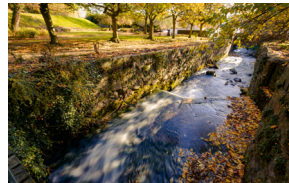
FALKIRK WHEEL

Take a ride on the world's first revolving boat lift which transports you between The Union and the Forth & Clyde Canals. This engineering wonder has become one of Scotland's most celebrated and iconic landmarks. You'll enjoy amazing views across the Forth Valley on your trip.



THE KELPIES

The Kelpies are two impressive 30-metre-high horse head sculptures which form the centrepiece of The Helix Park near Falkirk. A kelpie is a shape-changing aquatic spirit of Scottish legend - this inspired these true feats of engineering created to a design by sculptor Andy Scott. Step inside for a guided tour.



MILL GLEN

This impressive and beautiful glen near Tillicoultry in Clackmannanshire is partially wooded and a popular walking destination. The path opens out to a deep valley with a series of beautiful waterfalls. Several adventure companies offer visitors the opportunity to explore the glen and go canyoning through the gorge.



LAKE OF MENTEITH

The picturesque Lake of Menteith near Stirling is Scotland's only lake. On an island at its centre lies Inchmahome Priory which dates from 1238 and served as a refuge for both Robert the Bruce and, centuries later, the infant Mary Queen of Scots. The area also has a range of picnic spots and a network of walking routes.



DUNBLANE

Running through the charming town of Dunblane is the Allan Water, which is spanned by a 16th century single arch bridge and offers a number of enjoyable riverside walks. Dunblane also has an impressive cathedral and a clutch of 17th Century buildings including Scotland's oldest library housing a first edition of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*.

SCOTTISH BORDERS



MELLERSTAIN HOUSE

Considered one of Britain's finest stately homes, Mellerstain dates from the 18th Century, and has a superb collection of fine art, period furniture and china. One of its most unusual features is the ornamental lake which visitors can walk around, admiring stunning views of the Cheviot Hills.



ST MARY'S LOCH

St Mary's Loch is a popular beauty spot which lies in the picturesque Yarrow Valley. It's the largest natural loch in the Scottish Borders, and as well as stunning views, it also boasts a rich history. The adjacent Ettrick Forest is said to be where Sir William Wallace (*Braveheart*) would rally his allies prior to raids on nearby English settlements



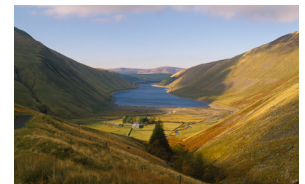
RIVER TWEED

The River Tweed is Internationally renowned and many hotels and operators along its banks can offer group experiences on and around the river. In addition, the 95-mile Tweed Cycle Way has the river as its main linking theme, running through the heart of the Scottish Borders with historic towns such as Peebles, Melrose and Kelso and their impressive ruined abbeys.



EYMOUTH AND ST ABBES

The historic 13th century fishing port of Eyemouth boasts a natural harbour with fine coastal scenery, and still has an active fleet today. Don't miss a visit to Gungahmore House, an 18th century mansion housing a museum telling the intriguing story of local smugglers. Nearby St Abbs attracts birdwatchers, nature lovers and walkers, keen to spot thousands of seabirds and explore the area's dramatic cliffs.



TWEEDSMUIR

The area around the village of Tweedsmuir is a popular location for those who want to escape the rigours of everyday life and enjoy some walking, biking and wildlife watching. Robert Burns stayed at the Crook Inn, a 17th century drover inn, and there are giant stones which are believed to mark the site of a Druid or Pictish site.