





**D**rama dawns at the first glimpse of the Gothic skyline that defines Edinburgh's medieval old town.

The tight sprawl of ancient multi-storied buildings lining the hilly, winding cobbled streets challenges imagination. The rapidly evolving 18<sup>th</sup> century New Town is Edinburgh's eye of epicureanism. From the traditional tune of bagpipes to the creative quirks of its Fringe Festival, the city is a chronicle that artfully blends the past with the present. A bubbling cauldron where hundreds of curious stories have unfolded.

#### **LUMINARIES OF LITERATURE**

Crowned as the first UNESCO City of Literature in 2004 for its legacy of world-class literature and learning since centuries, Edinburgh's commitment to the literary scene continues unfazed.

The distinguished list of its famous scribblers includes Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson and Robert Burns, Kenneth Grahame, Muriel Spark, Ian Rankin and Alexander McCall Smith. They are just some of the luminaries that the city is proud of.

Love for the written and spoken words drips from wall posters announcing creative writing courses, theatre performances, book reading sessions and invitations to book clubs. A wide network of library and information services offers a haven to book lovers, both locals and visitors. At the National Library of Scotland, bookworms can gloat over a rare letter submitted by Charles Darwin with a manuscript of 'On the Origin of Species' and gleefully scan the First Folio

# Edinburgh

## A cauldron of curious chronicles

Windswept remote highlands, forgotten castles and sloping summits of nude Munros humming songs of silence. Cocooned in the serenity of this Scotland countryside is its thousand-year-old capital city—Edinburgh, which inspired some of the finest literary geniuses that have walked the earth.

words // Punita Malhotra



## Local **INSIGHTS**



### **NICKNAMES**

The city is affectionately nicknamed *Auld Reekie* (means 'Old Smokey' in the Scots dialect) for the views of the smoke-covered Old Town. The city is also called the 'Athens of the North' for a variety of reasons. Sir Walter Scott referred to it as "yon Empress of the North". Whereas Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote that Edinburgh "is what Paris ought to be."



### **POTTER-THEMED STAY**

Edinburgh also offers Harry Potter-themed apartments for Potter fans. Rooms resembling a carriage from the Hogwarts Express or decorated like a Gryffindor dormitory (gold and red decor), gilded mirrors, old books, and various Harry Potter-themed cutlery and vintage knick-knacks provide a real experience of the magical world.

of Shakespeare. The Writers' Museum is a mecca for fans of Scott, Stevenson and Burns, the giants of Scottish literature. Visual treats include Burns' writing desk, Stevenson's riding boots and the printing press that produced Scott's novels. Book-buffs can pamper their literary palate at the city's many antique and contemporary bookshops. Deserving pitstops on this pilgrimage are Armchair Books, Golden Hare Books and Lighthouse Bookshop.

Poetry fans can reserve time to admire the full archive of Edwin Morgan, one of Scotland's most iconic modern poets at the strikingly modernist Scottish Poetry Library housing. St. Andrew Square is the outdoor hub that celebrates poetry events. Literary extravaganza in the city reaches its climax every year when the bibliophile community converges at the Charlotte Square to attend the renowned Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF).



On a statue-spotting expedition, one can pay tribute to bohemian poet Robert Fergusson, philosopher Robert Hume, economist Adam Smith, and author Robert Louis Stevenson.



#### LITTERED WITH LANDMARKS

From the name of its train station, Waverly, to one of the tallest monuments, Edinburgh commemorates its most famous native, Sir Walter Scott joyously. Quiet corners, open squares and important streets display permanent toasts to Edinburgh's greatest writers. On a statue-spotting expedition, one can pay tribute to several local literary idols, like bohemian poet Robert Fergusson, philosopher Robert Hume, economist Adam Smith, and author Robert Louis Stevenson. Edinburgh's hauntingly beautiful graveyards also make unusual, but fascinating literary destinations because of the many tombstones of essayists, poets and intellectuals who rest there.

To the keen eye, real-life locations from favourite pages jump out of the stone-studded streets of the Old Town. Whodunnit fans can soak up nostalgia at the Conan Doyle pub, feel goosebumps at the author's birthplace and learn about Joseph Bell, the surgeon who inspired the inimitable Sherlock Holmes. Another famous setting is the Oxford Bar, featured in the more modern Inspector Rebus series of Scottish crime writer, Ian Rankin. A pint at the atmospheric interiors of the Jekyll and Hyde pub fuel the thirst for more intense exploration.

#### LEAFING THROUGH LEGENDS

From the many tempting literary-themed walking tours, the Edinburgh Book-Lover's Tour offers an engrossing insight into the lives of famed authors, their works, historical contexts and their residences. On the other hand, amusement and entertainment set the tone for the

Edinburgh Literary Pub Tour, a humour-tinged exploration of the city's pubs giving a different perspective into three centuries of Scottish literature.

Decidedly, 'classic' is the apt tag for the 'Jekyll and Hyde' tour, set against the backdrop of the dark and dingy era of the infamous 19<sup>th</sup> century murderers. Peering down the narrow streets and dark closes, one can visualise the scenes that sparked off the idea for Robert Louis Stevenson to pen his acclaimed novel, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The most recognised landmark along this trail is Deacon Brodie's pub. It is believed that Stevenson's infamous two-faced maniac Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde was based on the late city councillor, Broadie's double life.

For many, the final indulgence in Edinburgh is the Potter Trail. Besotted followers of the series queue up in hordes to visit J K Rowling's many writing haunts, including the cute little Elephant Cafe, where she wrote her first Harry Potter book. Two other popular locations are the graveyard headstone which inspired the character of *He Who Must Not Be Named* and George Heriot's School, which bears an uncanny resemblance to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Pottermania reaches its peak at the colourful, multi-storied Victoria Street - the inspiration behind Diagon Alley. Pop into Museum Context (aka Diagon House) to buy some Harry Potter memorabilia or check out the Joke Shop. Unfortunately, it's not managed by Fred and George Weasley.. ✨