Edinburgh in 5 Days
What We Loved and What I'd Change



Alexandra in England

Hello! As you might know, I went to Edinburgh with my family for seven days. I am calling this guide “Edinburgh in 5 Days”, as we arrived in the evening on the first day after a long drive, and on the seventh day, we visited Rosslyn Chapel on our way home.

In this guide, I will share the places we visited and loved, my sightseeing tips and recommendations, and some special places to eat in Edinburgh.

Let’s begin!

Places We Visited, Loved and Learned From

- Edinburgh Castle and The One O'Clock Gun: Time Your Visit Right
- The Real Mary King's Close: Edinburgh's Hidden Streets
- Edinburgh Dungeon: Brave or Not? Know Before You Book
- The Chocolatarium: Our Rainy Day Pick
- Swanston Farm: Highland Cows Close to the City
- Cramond Island: Check the Tide Before You Go
- The Forth Bridges and South Queensferry: Worth It? My Honest Take
- Rosslyn Chapel: A Perfect Stop on the Way Home
- The Elephant House: For Harry Potter Fans
- Ciao Roma: Pirates and Homemade Ice Cream
- The Witchery: Our Special Lunch

Sightseeing Tips and Recommendations

- ### Edinburgh Castle and The One O'Clock Gun

If you want to see the One O'Clock Gun, I recommend booking your castle ticket for a time between 11.00 am and 12.30 pm. This gives you time to explore the castle before the gun is fired at 1 pm.

You do not need a separate ticket to see the One O'Clock Gun; it is included in your castle admission. Just remember that it is not fired on Sunday, Good Friday and Christmas Day, so check the schedule before your visit.

You can find the details on the official Edinburgh Castle website https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/.

- **The Real Mary King's Close**

Although children aged five and over can visit, I think this experience is much more enjoyable for older children who can appreciate the history and the stories behind it.

I would choose this attraction if you are curious what life was like in Edinburgh in the past. You can explore the hidden streets beneath the Old Town and hear stories about the people who lived there centuries ago.

The guided tour lasts around an hour, and I recommend booking in advance rather than leaving it until the last minute.

You can check tickets on The Real Mary King's Close website https://www.realmarykingsclose.com/tickets-prices/.

- **Edinburgh Dungeon**

This is one of those places where my family's reactions were completely different from mine! My son and husband absolutely loved it, while I found it scary.

The Edinburgh Dungeon is recommended for children aged eight and over, but I would have a chat with your children before booking. If they enjoy spooky stories, frightening characters and a bit of a scare, they might love it. If they are easily frightened, think carefully before taking them.

I am glad we went, even if I was not quite as brave as the other two!

Check the official website https://www.thedungeons.com/edinburgh/ for current age guidance and tickets.

- ## The Chocolatarium

I would save the Chocolatarium for a rainy day or an afternoon when you fancy doing something a little different.

When we are visiting a city, I like to make the most of the morning for sightseeing, when everyone still has plenty of energy. The Chocolatarium offers a more relaxed experience and this is why I recommend visiting it in the afternoon, evening or on a rainy day.

You can find more information on The Chocolatarium website https://www.chocolatarium.co.uk/.

- ## Swanston Farm

If you would like to see Highland cows without travelling too far from Edinburgh, Swanston Farm is worth considering.

The farm is only five miles away from the capital and there are three cows to see. Petting is not allowed and if you fancy having lunch there, it is recommended to book a table in advance.

You can find more information on the Swanston Farm website https://swanston.co.uk/the-farm/.

- ## Cramond Island

Cramond Island was one of the places we had considered visiting, but we did not manage to fit it into our trip. I still wanted to include it here because we enjoyed Cramond Beach, but missed the chance to visit Cramond Island. If you are planning your own visit, there is something important you need to know.

You cannot simply walk across to the island whenever you like. The causeway is covered by the tide, and the safe crossing times change from day to day.

Before you go, check the RNLI's Queensferry Lifeboat Station page https://rnli.org/find-my-nearest/lifeboat-stations/queensferry-lifeboat-station and make sure you have enough time to return safely. Please do not underestimate the tide. It is one of those places where planning beforehand really matters.

- ## The Forth Bridges and South Queensferry

I would recommend visiting South Queensferry if you want to see the famous bridges but also fancy exploring a lovely little town, going for a stroll and finding somewhere to eat.

However, I will be honest: if your only reason for going is to see the bridges, you might feel that it is simply another place to tick off your list.

You can find more information about the area on the official Forth Bridges website https://www.theforthbridges.org/visit-the-forth-bridges/.

- ## Rosslyn Chapel

We visited Rosslyn Chapel on our way home, and I think it is a good place to consider if you are travelling by car and have some extra time before leaving Scotland.

Rosslyn Chapel is half an hour away from Edinburgh and it is particularly interesting if you enjoy historic buildings and places with fascinating

stories behind them. You might also recognise it from *The Da Vinci Code* movie.

You can find the latest information on the official Rosslyn Chapel website https://www.rosslynchapel.com/visit/.

Special Places to Eat in Edinburgh

- ### The Elephant House

You must visit this place if you are a Harry Potter fan. The Elephant House is associated with J.K. Rowling's writing history in Edinburgh, and if you get a good spot, you can enjoy a view of Edinburgh Castle, too.

Before you leave, please go to the toilet! Why am I saying this? When you go down the stairs, you will find a corner decorated with Harry Potter-themed elements, where you can take some lovely pictures.

What a surprise it was when we discovered it! It was one of those little details we had not expected, and it made the visit even more memorable.

Keep in mind that this is a popular place, so you might have to wait in line to get in.

- ### Ciao Roma

If you are a pirate fan, you will love this place, and if you are not, you will soon become one!

The restaurant is beautifully decorated with pirates and pirate-themed details, and it was a very pleasant surprise for us. There are two entrances, and we used the one at 3 Drummond Street.

The food was delicious too, and their homemade ice cream is award-winning.

- **The Witchery**

I visited The Witchery restaurant with my family and fell in love with it. Elegant, mysterious and almost film-like, the restaurant has a character of its own.

Lunch here was one of the highlights of our Edinburgh trip, and I am so glad we included it in our plans. It was a memorable experience and a lovely way to enjoy one of the city's most distinctive restaurants.

I recommend booking a table in advance. You can find the menu and booking details on The Witchery website https://www.thewitchery.com/dine/.

Thank you for reading Alexandra in England, and I hope this guide is useful to you. Edinburgh is a beautiful city and there is plenty to see and do, but when you do not live there, time is limited.

These are the places we visited, and I recommend them to you too. Of course, I would love for us to go back and see even more of the sights, and when we do, you will see a blog post for sure.

If you want to read more about our trip to Edinburgh, there are two articles on the blog that may interest you: Best Places to Visit in Edinburgh's Old Town With or Without Children and Things To Do Near Edinburgh: 30-Minute Day Trips.

Let's stay in touch!

You can find more stories from England and our travels around Europe on the blog and follow along on Facebook and Pinterest.

Blog: https://alexandrainengland.co.uk/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/alexandrainengland

Pinterest: https://uk.pinterest.com/alexandrainengland/

Happy travels!

Love,

Alexandra