



# Edinburgh Taxis

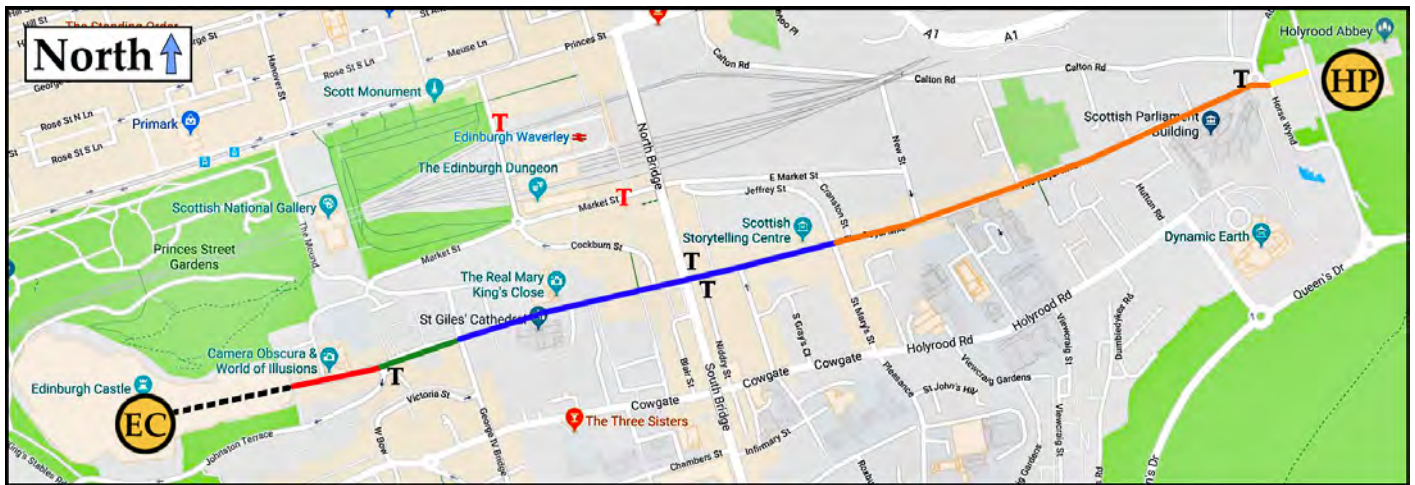
An Edinburgh Planning PDF

[OutlandishScotland.com](http://OutlandishScotland.com)

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

# Outlandish Scotland Journey

## Edinburgh Taxis



[©2018 Google Map segment (enhanced)]

So you'll have it handy, the map above is published in the City of Edinburgh/Edinburgh Castle (Site #39) chapter. Its full Key is there—along with the taxi key, below.

**BTW:** Taxi Ranks are also known as Taxi "Stances."

### **T—Taxi Ranks on the Royal Mile**

From left to right:

- Lawnmarket west end, south side
- North Bridge at High Street, east side
- High Street at Niddry Street, south side, in front of the Radisson Hotel
- Canongate east end, north side

### **T—Two major Taxi Ranks just north of the Royal Mile**

- Waverly Bridge, north end, east side (directly across from the Hop-on/off-Bus tours start point)
- Market Street, north side (Waverly Rail Station entrance)

### Edinburgh Taxi Companies vs. Private Hire Car Companies

There are several companies in Edinburgh that offer what is considered "taxi" service. Two are well-respected "Black Cab" taxi companies—also called "Hackney" cabs or carriages. Closely regulated by the City of Edinburgh Council, these Black Cab companies have a history of 50 to 90 years of operation. The other Edinburgh taxi companies are "private hire" vehicle services, and are *not* so closely regulated.

After hours of researching the differences between them, we discovered a concise description on the City Cabs website. Although penned by a Black Cab company, the information it contained was accurate. We augmented their description with additional information, and present our version below. Unless otherwise indicated, the quoted segments within our description are from the City Cabs website.

<https://www.citycabs.co.uk/news/general/taxis-and-private-hire/>



## Taxis

Legitimate taxis are easily identified by the Taxi sign (aka, “For Hire” sign) on the roof of the vehicle. Only taxis are allowed to queue in taxi ranks, and only taxis can be hailed from the sidewalk of streets without ranks. When the Taxi sign is illuminated, the taxi is available—put your hand up and wave at it. If the sign is not lit up, the driver has a passenger on board or is en route to a job.

All licensed Edinburgh taxis must have a yellow and white “plate” displayed on the front and back of the vehicle. They’ll also have the vehicle’s call-sign identification number on both the front and back windows. City Cabs taxis are identified by white call-sign numbers, Central Taxis’ cabs have yellow call-sign numbers.

## Private Hire

Private hire cars do not have Taxi lights on their roofs. Instead, they have a sticker on each side of the vehicle which reads, “Pre-Booked Hires Only.” Private hire cars also post a plate on the front and back of the vehicle, but theirs reads, “Private Hire Car.”

Private hire cars are not allowed to queue in a taxi rank and cannot be hailed in the street.

“By entering a private hire car without [having pre-booked it] you invalidate the vehicle’s insurance and put yourself at risk. Pre-booking, you are making a record of your journey and are ensuring that you are traveling in a vehicle that’s fully licensed.”

Drivers of taxis and private hire cars are required to be licensed by Edinburgh Council and each must carry photographic evidence of their licensure. If you’re unsure about the vehicle ask to see the driver’s badge before getting in.

Before boarding a pre-booked private hire car (especially an Uber), ask the driver to tell you the name of the person they have been sent to pick up. If they don’t know your name, do not get in.

“Taxi drivers need to complete ‘the Knowledge’ test of Edinburgh before receiving their [license]. It can take around 6 months of studying the streets of Edinburgh before passing the test. The [license] is a requirement for anyone who wishes to drive a taxi. By passing the Knowledge test drivers are able to get you to your destination by using the quickest route.”



Private hire and Uber drivers merely need to fill out an application and pay a fee to receive a license. Because passing the Knowledge test is not a requirement, their familiarity with the most efficient routes within Edinburgh and surrounding areas may be limited.

“Uber has made it easy for someone with no knowledge of the city to drive a hire car [in Edinburgh]. They don’t require drivers to pass any knowledge test, but the public don’t really care because they’ve all got satnav and [think] that’s all you need.”

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/transport/number-of-private-hire-cars-in-edinburgh-overtake-black-cabs-1-4538563>

In August of 2017, the Edinburgh Evening News reported the results of the most recent Edinburgh Taxi Demand study. The study included Public Attitude Surveys performed face-to-face (at Taxi ranks and via telephone), as well as online surveys *verified* as having been completed by genuine members of the public—surveys completed by taxi trade members were omitted from the study.

“People were asked if they had a preference between taxis or private hire cars when ordering a licensed vehicle. Nearly 62 percent preferred taxis, 18 percent private hire cars and 20 percent expressed no preference.”

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/transport/readers-have-their-say-about-capital-s-taxis-1-4538616>



Royal Mile Radisson Hotel taxi rank



Edinburgh Airport taxi rank

## Edinburgh Black Cabs

The Black Cabs of Edinburgh are the same type of vehicles as those traditionally used in London, with the same iconic shape. These cabs can comfortably seat up to 5 people, with room to stow at least one piece of luggage per person. Most Black Cabs are wheelchair accessible.

Each of the two Edinburgh Black Cab companies also have larger vehicles available for pre-hire (more info below).

Metered taxi fares within the city are regulated. The base fee is for 1 or 2 people traveling, but fares fluctuate depending on several additional factors. These factors include—but are *not* limited to:

- More than 2 people traveling
- The day of the week or weekend

- The time of day
- Traveling on Christmas day or New Years day
- Wait time (if pre-booked)
- The total distance traveled

You can download a PDF explaining the full Edinburgh taxi fare factors at the link below.

<http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20088/public-transport/1090/taxi-fares-in-edinburgh/1>

When traveling *from* the city centre *to* your Edinburgh lodgings—no matter the time of day—we recommend heading to a taxi rank. The rank at the foot of the Royal Mile [Canongate east end, north side] is particularly convenient for Outlanderites who have just finished their *Outlander* novel and film site stroll down the Royal Mile.

Catching a cab at one of the Royal Mile taxi ranks also seems to be best for those returning to their lodgings after enjoying an Edinburgh evening tour, or any other nighttime activity in the city centre. There are Marshals at many ranks on the weekend to assist customers.



As you may already have noticed, not all Black Cabs are **black** from top to tires. While they all have the same iconic shape, several are covered with advertising. The colorful ads are considered the cab's "livery."

Without Further Ado, Meet the Two Edinburgh Black Cab Taxi Companies:

### Edinburgh City Cabs

### Edinburgh Central Taxis

- These two taxi companies have been operating in Edinburgh far longer than the private hire car companies.
- It is their cabs that you'll find queued in the Edinburgh taxi ranks.
- Because of their long history of service, we also recommend using these companies when calling for a cab to take you from your Edinburgh lodgings to the city centre—or wherever.



## City Cabs Black Taxis

The official Edinburgh  
Airport Taxi company

0131 228 1211

City Cabs is the longest operating taxi company in Edinburgh.

“With over 90 years experience, City Cabs provide a fast, efficient, reliable and safe taxi service in Edinburgh that is backed up by the best technology.

“As Edinburgh’s largest association of licensed hackney taxis, City Cabs are currently operating with a fleet of over 450 vehicles, all of which are regulated by the City of Edinburgh Council.

“City Cabs (Edinburgh) Ltd is a co-operative, owned and operated by the members [drivers], this in turn means each member is committed to the long term success of the business and to the City of Edinburgh.”

<https://www.citycabs.co.uk/>



**FYI:** With the ever-increasing number of private hire cars available in Edinburgh, City Cabs has recently added other vehicle styles to its fleet. While these vehicles are primarily intended for pre-booking, they are legitimate taxis. They can queue in a taxi rank, and can be hailed from the sidewalk of a street without a rank.

Even if it doesn’t look like a Black Cab, if there’s a Taxi light on the roof it is a *real* taxi.

On City Cabs’ website you’ll find links to their **free iPhone or Android app** to assist you in pre-booking a cab from anywhere within Edinburgh—including the city centre. Below are a few highlights from the app’s description.

Our simple user-friendly app allows you to:

- Confirm, cancel and edit bookings
- Track your cab using GPS
- Pay by cash or debit/credit card ...
- Book [travel] to and from Edinburgh Airport
- Select vehicle type (All vehicles are wheelchair accessible but please request this option in settings) ...
- Set up call backs ...



Our app has the added functionality of a 'Buddy Phone' service. Include your buddy's number to your booking and we'll send them a notification so that they can track your taxi. We can even send them a text to let them know you've arrived safely.



## Central Taxis

0131 229 2468

<https://www.taxis-edinburgh.co.uk/>

"For 50 years we have been Edinburgh's most reliable taxi company. A co-operative with over 1100 drivers from the local community, Central Taxis is proud to operate Edinburgh's biggest fleet with over 465 black taxis serving you 24/7."

Like City Cabs, Central Taxis has recently expanded their fleet with vehicle styles different from the iconic Black Cab taxis. Again, if there's a Taxi light on the roof it is a *real* taxi.

"Each vehicle in our fleet has uniform signage. Identifying yellow call-sign numbers are affixed to front and rear windscreens. These are preceded by a 'P' and 2-3 digit call-sign, alongside the company logo."

The description of Central Taxis' app is relatively the same as that of the City Cabs app. But, it appears as though the app link on their website leads only to the iPhone Central Taxis app. To obtain their Android phone app, go to the Google Play store and search "Central Taxis Edinburgh."

<https://www.taxis-edinburgh.co.uk/bookings/>



### Fare Estimator

Welcome to the Edinburgh Taxi Fare Finder. This page will calculate your cab fare using Edinburgh, UK taxi rates. To begin, enter your travel information in the fields below the map.

All results are estimates and may vary depending on external factors such as traffic and weather.

A website you'll find helpful when planning your holiday budget for Edinburgh is the Taxi Fare Finder. Although the results are estimates, you'll obtain amounts to consider when deciding whether to use a bus or a taxi.

<https://www.taxifarefinder.com/main.php?city=Edinburgh-UK-United-Kingdom&lang=en>

If plotting a trip to Edinburgh Castle from your lodgings, use “Tartan Weaving Mill & Exhibition, Castlehill, Edinburgh, UK” as the destination.



\*As of October, 2019, the Gett UK links do not work. We are unsure if Gett is still offered in the UK. We are leaving the Gett links in, in case they repopulate.

Gett

<https://gett.com/uk/edinburgh/>

<https://gett.com/uk/edinburgh/>

Previously known as “GetTaxi,” Gett is a global company that connects customers with taxi transportation on-demand, via an app. The main differences between Gett and Uber:

- The Gett app hails only taxis—no private hire cars.
- The fares are fixed and locked-in, as well as being cheaper than metered fares.

“The Gett revenue model varies from country to country. It usually includes any of these three models: charging monthly dispatch fees from taxi drivers, charging a per ride fee from drivers, or charging fees for corporate rides.”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gett>

Basically, with the Gett app you get a professional driver and a real taxi with lots of room, for a fare far cheaper than what a metered journey would cost you. Because the driver is charged every time she/he picks up a Gett discounted fare customer, however, the service is only advantageous to taxi drivers during low demand periods when even *half* a normal fare is better than nothing.

“Gett works pretty much the same way Uber does—you plug in your location, it calls for cars, and pretty soon one shows up. ...

“But then, on Saturday afternoon [in Edinburgh], it started raining. I tried hailing a cab through Gett and there were none! There were no cabs on the little animated map, and there were no drivers answering my call.

“I ended up calling a ‘private hire’ minicab company on the phone. It was called ‘Computer Cabs,’ and naturally a human answered. LOLs. She said a cab would be on its way. I asked how long it would take, and she replied she didn’t know. As soon as the cab could get to me.

“So I stood around for 10 minutes like an idiot, and then hailed a cab on the street.

“It turns out that when there is peak demand for taxis—when it’s raining or rush hour—then cab drivers are happy to take riders who hail them in the street [or are queued in a taxi rank]. They don’t respond to calls from Gett ...

“With Uber, when peak demand kicks in, the app sets a price surge. Uber users hate the surge because it makes rides more expensive. But [private hire] drivers love it because they know



they will get more money. The Uber app's price surge alerts more drivers, and more of them hit the street. That is why Uber is so reliable: there are always more Uber cars."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/gett-v-uber-which-is-better-2015-9>

## Uber

<https://www.uber.com/global/en/cities/edinburgh/>

"Founded in 2009, Uber, an app-based car-hiring service headquartered in San Francisco, now operates in 260 cities and 45 countries [including Edinburgh and Glasgow].

### "How Uber Works

"Uber is a ride referral service. Unlike cab companies, Uber drivers use their personal cars and pay for their gas and expenses. ... Uber's smartphone app connects riders with drivers using GPS technology. The company processes payments, which are made by passengers via the credit card they added to Uber's platform at signup. Uber takes a cut from each fare and direct deposits the rest of the money into the driver's account.

"Uber rides are usually considerably cheaper than a standard cab fare. Savings drop when you use the service during peak times when surge pricing is in effect. At such times, which include rush hour traffic hours, you can expect to pay much higher rates than usual. ...

### "The Risks for Passengers

"Uber seems like an ideal solution for 'seamlessly' connecting riders and drivers. As a passenger, if you need a ride, you request one with a push of a button on your smartphone and a driver is on his or her way.

"Need some cash? Have a car that is less than 10 years old (or newer) and a clear driving record? Apply to be a Uber driver. It only takes a few minutes.

"Like many things in life that read well on paper, it turns out that Uber can be a risky choice for passengers and drivers. Before hailing an Uber car, ... [To view the reasons Uber can be a risky choice, click on the link at the end of this quote to read the full article.] ...

### "Bottom Line

"Uber is affordable! But it stays affordable by cutting corners, minimizing safety checks, and underpaying their drivers.

"Of course, traveling always involves some level of risk. Riding with (or being) a licensed taxi driver cannot guarantee your safety, either. Whether you're a driver or a passenger, you should keep your wits about you, do your research, and stay safe out there."

<https://www.supermoney.com/2016/05/5-reasons-uber-can-risky-choice-drivers-passengers/>

[Updated 10/15/2018]

Here's another, more recently posted, evaluation of Uber vs. Gett.

"I find Uber can be very expensive and more often than not nowadays I am being quoted £8/£9 for a journey that usually costs £3/£4 because of a price surge.

“Gett does not have price surges. When booking your taxi using the Gett app you can choose to pay by card or cash, and when paying by card you get a fixed rate upfront cost for your journey which is the actual price you pay, no hidden charges and certainly no ‘price surges.’ ...

“I find Gett taxi even safer than catching a regular taxi because I can see details about the driver before he/she picks me up. I can see their name, photo and read previous customer reviews. You don’t get this option on blind pickups.

“Gett only works with licensed Black Cabs and Hackney Carriages which are fully regulated by Transport for London (in London) and the local councils in all other UK cities. All Gett drivers undergo thorough CRB [Criminal Records Bureau] and medical checks.”

<http://savvymumuk.co.uk/reviews/gett-taxi-review-wont-use-uber/>



### **Outlandish Scotland Journey’s Taxi vs. Gett vs. Uber Recommendations**

- We prefer supporting the long-standing Black Cab companies and legitimate drivers in Edinburgh.
  - Use the City Cabs or Central Taxis apps when pre-booking or summoning a cab with your smartphone.
  - Those of us with dumbphones politely ask our lodgings host to call a City Cabs or Central Taxi to pick us up. (This saves us from having to figure out how to dial the international number.)
  - When heading to a taxi rank, stay alert! You may be able to hail a City Cabs or Central Taxi from the sidewalk of a street without a rank.
- For Outlanderites who want a discounted taxi fare, we suggest using Gett rather than Uber. If a legitimate taxi doesn’t respond it is a high demand period, which means that the Uber private hire surge price may cost you more than a metered fare for your journey. When that is the case, head to a taxi rank, or use the City Cabs or Central Taxis app to summon a cab.

### **Taxi Safety Tips**

**On the weekends there are Marshals at many taxi ranks.**

These individuals wear a reflective, highly visible jacket and are tasked with the responsibility of protecting the public. They are linked by radio to the CCTV Control Room and can quickly summon law enforcement. Their many duties include:

- Ensuring that the queue remains orderly and newcomers join at its end.

- Reporting private hire cars that enter the rank, or illegally “ply for hire” by parking nearby.
- Ensuring that people waiting for a cab do not behave in an unsociable manner.
- Providing conflict management should problems arise on the rank between the general public and taxi drivers, or between taxi drivers.
- Ensuring that lone females, vulnerable persons, or persons accompanied by children are adequately supervised and assisted.
- Protecting the right of taxi drivers to refuse fares when they have a reasonable concern, and to set the price of a fare prior to departing if the journey takes them beyond the city boundary.

**Please Note:** “Some taxi drivers will refuse to let you on with food, and if you look in a very bad state (excessively drunk) they won’t risk having you in the cab. Should you be sick in the taxi there is a clean up charge of [£50] pounds.”

<https://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g186525-s304/Edinburgh:United-Kingdom:Taxis.And.Rental.Cars.html>

### Safety Tips for All Taxis

- If traveling alone and getting into a hailed cab—or one from a taxi rank—snap a pic of the vehicle’s license plate.  
Send the photo to a family member or friend, letting them know you’ll text them when you arrive at your destination. (Don’t forget to do so!)
- If you’re riding alone, sit in the backseat.  
This ensures you can safely exit on either side of the vehicle to avoid moving traffic, and it gives you and your driver some personal space.
- Buckle up.
- Do not fall asleep in the taxi.  
This is especially important if you’re a woman. Male taxi drivers can’t go in the back to wake a woman up. If you fall asleep, you could find yourself awakened by a police officer. Stay awake by chatting with your driver.
- Chat with your driver but do not share any personal information.  
The driver doesn’t need to know your full name. Certainly do *not* share your phone number or address, for any reason.
- Be kind and respectful.  
Driving a cab can sometimes be a thankless, stressful job. Please respect your driver and her/his car.

**BTW:** Tipping the driver isn’t required, but if you’re happy with the ride it is polite to do so.

If it is a low fare (an in-city trip), rounding it up to the nearest pound is fine. For longer journeys—such as a ride to the airport—or if you have a lot of luggage and the driver helps you, a couple pounds is appropriate.



**Additional Safety Tips for Taxis Booked by App**

- When booking by app the price of the fare is confirmed.  
The driver shouldn't charge you any more. The app also should allow you to tip (or not) after the ride.
- Wait inside the establishment where you are being picked up.  
Once a vehicle is booked and dispatched, a smartphone app user can monitor the taxi's progress while waiting inside their pickup point. This allows you to avoid standing on the sidewalk with your phone out, which may attract thieves or pickpockets.
- Get in the correct car!
  - Before you get in, check that license plate, driver photo, and driver name all match what's listed in the app.
  - Before you get in, ask the driver for the name of the passenger she/he is picking up.  
Never, ever, say your name first! This way, you can be 100 percent sure that the person is your driver, and not some scammer or pirate.
- Share your trip details with a friend.  
Most taxi apps have the ability to share your driver's name, photo, license plate, and location with a friend or family member. With some apps they can even track your trip and see your ETA without downloading the app.
- While en route, follow along in your own maps app.  
Enter your destination and observe your taxi's progress, noting any odd route shifts.
- Give feedback on your trip.  
If the app allows you to make comments about the ride when it's over, your feedback will help the company to improve their service. The Uber app allows you to rate your driver—and allows your driver to rate you!

**Final Universal Taxi Tip**

- Trust your gut!  
If something about the cab seems fishy, or you have any sense of discomfort when meeting the driver, do not get in the taxi.
- If already on the road and something untoward or frightening occurs, call 999 (the UK's version of 911) immediately!