



# Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Tours

An Edinburgh Planning PDF

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

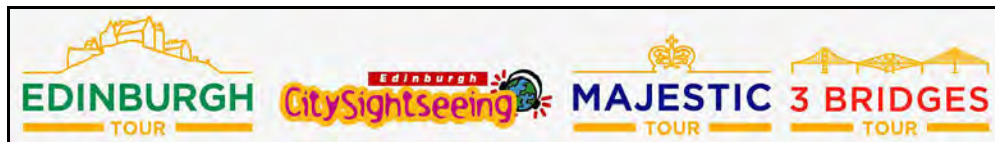
A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

## Outlandish Scotland Journey Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Tours



If you enjoy Hop-on/off-Buses, these buses are the *crème de la crème!*

In August of 2016, Edinburgh Bus Tours launched a brand new, £6.5m fleet of 30 vehicles, specially designed to provide optimal rider comfort and increased visibility from every seat. These buses also are equipped with high-tech operating systems to ensure safety when motoring around a city with so many steep streets. The new buses are also eco-friendly.



**Edinburgh Tours offers three Hop-on/off-Bus tours, and one Bus & Boat tour.**

<https://edinburghtour.com/>

All four tours “start” at a bus stop on the north end of Waverley Bridge, just a few steps south of Princes Street. Waverley Bridge also is served by several Lothian public bus routes, making it easy to reach the bus tours’ start point from lodgings anywhere within Edinburgh or its surrounding villages.

However! You can board one of the three Hop-on/off-Bus tours at *any* stop on its route, purchasing your ticket from the first bus driver you encounter, or activating your online-purchased ticket voucher. From there you can ride the full route, or hop off and back on as you wish, for the duration of your 24- or 48-hour ticket.

Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Tour Highlights		
Edinburgh Tour (The Green Bus)	City Sightseeing Tour (The Red Bus)	Majestic Tour (The Blue Bus)
Old and New Town Sites	Old and New Town Sites (slightly different route)	A few City Centre Sites, Sites North of the City, & the Docks
Live guide (English) The guide is seated on the top deck, but her/his commentary is broadcasted on both decks.	Pre-recorded commentary in 9 languages. “Horrible Histories” Children’s pre-recorded commentary. Headphones provided on bus.	Pre-recorded commentary in 10 languages. Headphones provided on bus.

Each Hop-on/off-Bus' full route ride lasts approximately 1 hour—longer if traffic is particularly heavy. Thus, riding the full route on all three Hop-on/off-Buses will take at least 3 hours.

The Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Buses operate from 9am each day, all year round.

- During high tourist season, the Green and Blue Buses run until 6pm, Red Buses until 7 or 8pm.
- Between November and March, the Green and Red Hop-on/off-Bus services stop at 4pm—the Blue service stops at 5pm.
- The frequency of a bus arriving at each of its stops during high tourist season: every 10 or 12 minutes for Green and Red Buses; every 15 minutes for Blue Buses.
- Between November and March, Green and Red Buses arrive at each of their stops every 20 minutes, Blue Buses every 30 minutes.



### Edinburgh Tours 3 Bridges Bus and Boat Tour

The 3 Bridges Bus and Boat Tour begins in covered-top buses that take visitors from Edinburgh's New Town [the Waverley Bridge bus stop] to Queensferry. There you board a boat cruise that includes stunning views of the Firth of Forth and its 3 Bridges, the iconic Forth Rail Bridge, and Inchcolm Island.

The 3 Bridges Bus and Boat Tour operates only between the end of March and beginning of November. During those months, a 3 Bridges bus leaves the Waverley Bridge bus stop every hour from 10am to 3pm; then at 3:45, 4:45, and 5:45pm. The 3 Bridges Bus and Boat tour lasts 3 hours.

Learn more about the boat cruise portion of this tour at:

<https://www.forthtours.com/cruises/forth-bridges-cruise-bus-and-boat-tour/>

FYI: If you purchase a 3 Bridges Bus and Boat Tour ticket online, but poor weather conditions cause the cruise portion of the tour to be cancelled on the day you arrive, you *will* receive a refund.

### Hop-on/off-Bus Tickets

A 24- or 48-hour Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus ticket is valid from the time it is purchased from a bus driver on the day of your visit. If your Edinburgh itinerary prevents you from boarding the first Hop-on/off-Bus until 3pm, for instance, that's when your 24- or 48-hour access begins. You'll be able to ride that Hop-on/off-Bus from 9am to 3pm the next day—or from 9am the next day to 3pm on the following day, if you have a 48-hour ticket.

Hop-on/off-Bus ticket vouchers purchased *online* from Edinburgh Tours are valid for **6 months** from the date of purchase. They become activated for 12- or 48-hours from the time they are presented to the first bus driver and exchanged for a ticket.

**We Suggest *Not* Purchasing a Hop-on/off-Bus Ticket Online:**

- There is no discount for online ticket purchase.
- If your holiday is unexpectedly delayed, and cannot be rebooked within 6 months from your online Hop-on/off-Bus ticket purchase, the ticket will expire and *not* be refunded.
- If you lose your online-purchased ticket voucher prior to arriving in Edinburgh, you will have to buy another ticket.
- It really is best to just buy your ticket from the first bus driver you encounter. Any Hop-on/off-Bus driver can sell you any of the Hop-on/off-Bus ticket types.
- Similarly, a 3 Bridges Tour bus driver can sell you a bus and boat ticket—*and* will be able to advise you if weather conditions have caused the cruise portion to be cancelled that day.

 Hop-on hop-off ticket valid for 24 hours	 Hop-on hop-off ticket valid for 24 hours	 Hop-on hop-off ticket valid for 24 hours	 Bus and boat experience ticket
<b>Adult</b> <b>£15</b>	<b>Adult</b> <b>£15</b>	<b>Adult</b> <b>£15</b>	<b>Adult</b> <b>£22</b>
<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> (with ID) <b>£14</b>	<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> (with ID) <b>£14</b>	<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> (with ID) <b>£14</b>	<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> (with ID) <b>£20</b>
<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) <b>£7.50</b>	<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) <b>£7.50</b>	<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) <b>£7.50</b>	<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) <b>£11</b>
<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) <b>£36</b>	<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) <b>£36</b>	<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) <b>£36</b>	<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) <b>£54</b>

The graphic above identifies the 24-hour ticket price for each of the Edinburgh Tours. As you'll see below, a 24-hour pass valid on *all three* Hop-on/off-Buses costs only £5 more.



<b>GRAND 24</b> Best for: 1 day in Edinburgh	<b>GRAND 48</b> Best for: 2 days in Edinburgh	<b>GRAND 48+</b> Best for: 2 days exploring further afield
🕒 24 hours unlimited travel	🕒 48 hours unlimited travel	🕒 48 hours unlimited travel
Valid on our 3 City Tours	Valid on our 3 City Tours	Valid on all of our tours
		
<b>Adult</b> £20	<b>Adult</b> £22	<b>Adult</b> £32
<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> £18	<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> £20	<b>Senior</b> (age 60+)/ <b>Student</b> £30
<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) £10	<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) £11	<b>Child</b> (age 5-15) £16
<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) £49	<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) £54	<b>Family</b> (2 adults & up to 3 children) £79

### Should You Buy an Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Ticket?

From “15 Edinburgh Scotland Travel Mistakes to Avoid ...”:

“Why would you want to pay so much [to ride a Hop-on/off-Bus] when [Edinburgh] public buses are cheap, easy to use, and take you anywhere that your little tourist heart desires?”

“The only way I could see [a Hop-on/off-Bus] being useful is if you had 24 hours in the city and literally just wanted to sit on the bus and observe all the sites that Edinburgh has to offer. Otherwise, the price of this bus is just not worth it, especially since Edinburgh is a highly walkable city that is super easy to navigate. So do yourself (and your wallet) a favor and step away from the hop on hop off bus.”

<https://www.girlwiththepassport.com/edinburgh-scotland-travel-mistakes/>

From Novel Holiday author CD Miller:

“I must admit it: I’m a sucker for open-top tour buses. I absolutely adore being able to sit back and enjoy an unimpeded view of tall city architecture from the top deck of a bus—a view that cannot be appreciated from any other mode of transportation. In fact, I’ll often ride the full route of an open-top bus tour to gain a sense of what the city has to offer *before* beginning to hop off and back on at the sites I plan to visit. (Sometimes, what I see from the bus makes me revise which places I visit.)

“Open-top tour buses also are an excellent way for travelers with mobility difficulties to effortlessly enjoy all of a big city’s most famous sites. In 2006, I shepherded my parents around London for two days. Dad was heavily dependent on a cane and Mom often became short of breath when walking. Thus, the first step of our itinerary was riding the full route of a London “Big Bus” — a 2 hour and 10 minute excursion. In spite of conditions being chilly at times, and occasionally rainy (hoorah for disposable plastic rain parkas), Mom and Dad were all smiles for the duration of the ride—literally.”



“Carol, that was Big Ben!” “I know it was, Ray.” // “Who cares about a little rain? We didn’t melt!”

**That Said, Girl With the Passport is Right!**

Edinburgh’s city centre is highly walkable, even if hilly.

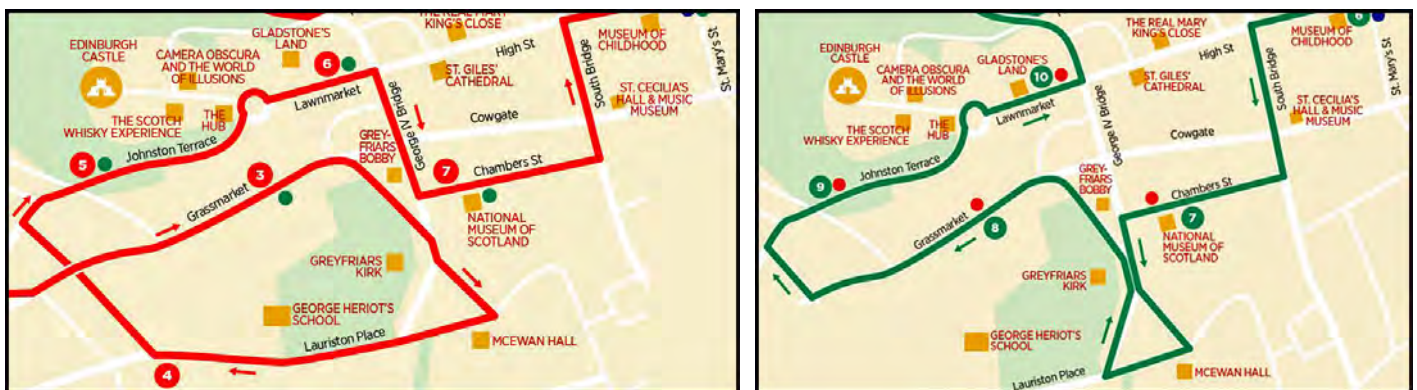
Additionally, Lothian public buses really are inexpensive—only £4 for an Adult unlimited bus travel DAYticket, which will take you almost\* anywhere you desire.

See our **Edinburgh Public Buses** PDF to learn more about Lothian public buses:

<http://OutlandishScotland.com/EdinburghPublicBuses.pdf>

★Public buses do *not* stop near Edinburgh Castle—possibly due to year-round traffic congestion on the Royal Mile. It is at least a 10 to 15 minute walk between the closest public bus stops and the Castle Esplanade. The Green and Red Hop-on/off-Bus routes, however, have a common stop on the Royal Mile near the north end of George IV Bridge—only a 3 minute walk from the Esplanade.

Furthermore, it sometimes is faster to *walk* between Edinburgh City Centre sites than to ride a Hop-on/off-Bus between them—even if you’ve purchased a Grand ticket and have access to all 3 tour buses.



Let’s say, for instance, you wanted to *ride* the 4 blocks between the Royal Mile at George IV Bridge and the National Museum of Scotland. No problemo! You could hop on a Red Bus at its #6 stop and hop off at the next stop, #7. [Pic above, left.]

Riding in the opposite direction, however—*from* the National Museum of Scotland *to* the Royal Mile at George IV Bridge—is problematic.

If you only had a Red Bus ticket, you would have to ride almost the entire route to return to the Royal Mile at George IV Bridge. This journey would take just less than *one hour*.

If you had a 3-bus ticket, you could board a Green Bus at its #7 stop, stay on the bus at stops #8 and #9 (waiting for passengers to hop on and off at each), and finally disembark at the Green Bus stop #10.

Even though it is an uphill walk *from* the National Museum of Scotland *to* the Royal Mile at George IV Bridge, you could leisurely stroll those 4 blocks in less than half the time it takes to ride there—even on the Green Bus.

BTW: The Blue Bus does not have stops at the Royal Mile intersection with George IV Bridge, *or* at the National Museum of Scotland.



[Our **Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Route Maps** PDF includes full-sized versions of the maps above.]

## Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus Route Maps

All three of the Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus route maps—as well as the 3 Bridges Bus and Boat tour map—are individually available for download online. To provide Outlanderites with a single source for evaluating these routes, we put all four of them together in one PDF, and freely-posted it on our website.

<http://OutlandishScotland.com/EdHopOnOffBusRoutes.pdf>

For more information about the Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Buses, visit the Edinburgh Tour FAQ page:

<https://edinburghtour.com/questions/>





## The Royal Edinburgh Ticket

<https://edinburghtour.com/royal-edinburgh-ticket/>

Edinburgh Tours offers a special pass called the Royal Edinburgh Ticket. It provides entry to Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Yacht Britannia, and Holyrood Palace—as well as a 48 hour pass on all three of their Hop-on/off-Buses.

You'll find an in-depth review of this ticket—including an explanation of how we reached the recommendation below—in our **Free Entry Passes for Visiting Scotland** PDF, posted on the **Outlandish Extras** directory.

<http://www.outlandishscotland.com/FreeEntryPasses.pdf>

### We Recommend the Royal Edinburgh Ticket *ONLY* for Outlanderites:

- Who won't be purchasing an Historic Environment Scotland Explorer Pass.
- Who are interested in spending 2 hours visiting the Royal Yacht Britannia.
- Who would enjoy riding *each* of the three open-top Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Buses over two days.



At Last We Come to the  
*Outlandish Scotland Journey*  
**Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus  
Recommendations**  
**For Those Who Want to  
Ride an Open-Top Bus  
in Edinburgh**

- You really don't need more than a **24 hour ticket on One Bus**.

You'll enjoy unimpeded views of Edinburgh's most marvelous architecture from the top deck of whichever Hop-on/off-Bus you select—the views are simply seen from different angles and distances, depending on which bus you pick.

The secret is to pick the route that visits Edinburgh sites *you* find most appealing.

- The Green Bus (Edinburgh Tour) and Red Bus (City Sightseeing) routes will show you basically the same city centre sites, and either route will be helpful to selecting Non-*Outlander* places to visit.



The only differences between Green and Red Bus routes—besides the direction of travel—are found on the left side of their route maps.

- The Blue Bus (Majestic Tour) skips most of the Edinburgh city centre, but will take you to places north of there—places *not* within convenient walking distance from the city centre—such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Firth of Forth harbor and dock areas, and the Royal Yacht Britannia.
- Individuals with mobility difficulties may wish to make open-top bus touring their Non-*Outlander* activity on the Holyrood Palace day of their two-day Edinburgh itinerary. If so, purchase a 24-hour ticket for all three buses. It costs only £5 more than a 24-hour single bus ticket.
- Outlanderites who truly enjoy open-top bus tours—but still want to visit all the Edinburgh sites they possibly can in two days—should consider buying a 48-hour Hop-on/off-Bus ticket, and riding the full 1-hour route on each of the three buses over two days. The 48-hour three bus ticket costs only £7 more than a 24-hour single bus ticket.



**Craigmillar Castle (Site #48)    Preston Mill (Site # 51)    Roslin Glen Ruins (Site #53)**

[See also: Prestonpans Battlefield (Site #49), Gosford House (Site #50), Glencorse Old Kirk (Site #52)]

Whether visiting *Outlander* sites near Edinburgh (above)  
*Before* or *After* visiting the City,  
 Schedule at least **Two Days** to Enjoy the City of Edinburgh

On the last page of this PDF you'll find our recommended two-day itinerary for those who wish to enjoy a Hop-on/off-Bus tour of Edinburgh, using a 24-hour single bus ticket.

We suggest enjoying the bus tour on Day One because what you see on the tour may influence your choice of activities during the rest of your visit.

It is better to pair a Hop-on/off-Bus bus tour with your Holyrood Palace visit, rather than with the Royal Mile *Outlander* sites visits, because the Royal Mile runs *uphill* from the palace, *downhill* from the castle.

Additionally, all three Hop-on/off-Bus routes have a stop at Holyrood Palace, but only the Red and Green routes have a stop near Edinburgh Castle.

### Edinburgh Day One:

- Head to Holyrood Palace (Site #46) in the morning. It opens at 9:30am.
- When your visit is complete, board one of the three Hop-on/off-Buses.
- Ride the Full Route (1 hour).
- After arriving back at Holyrood Palace, stay on the bus, but begin hopping off and back on at the Non-*Outlander* places you wish to visit.

See our our **Non-*Outlander* Edinburgh Places of Interest** PDF

<http://OutlandishScotland.com/NonOutlanderEdSites.pdf>

**Please Note:** The Blue Bus stop closest to the National Museum of Scotland is #12, near the Royal Mile and St Mary's Street intersection.

- Consider enjoying one of the Edinburgh evening walking tours, as discussed in our **Edinburgh Old Town Walking Tours** PDF.  
<http://OutlandishScotland.com/EdinburghWalkingTours.pdf>

### Edinburgh Day Two:

- Follow directions in the Edinburgh Castle (Site #39) chapter for enjoying a morning tour of this marvelous castle, culminating with the firing of the One o'Clock Gun—perhaps extending your visit by stopping in the Portcullis Shop before exiting the castle gate.
- Cross the Castle Esplanade and begin a downhill stroll along the Royal Mile, stopping at the Edinburgh *Outlander* film sites and novel locations (Sites #40 through #45).  
[Anticipate your Royal Mile *Outlander* visit lasting at least 3.5 hours.]
- If you'll not be leaving early the next morning, consider enjoying another of the Edinburgh evening walking tours after dinner.

Thus endeth our Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Bus tour suggestions.

We hope you find them helpful.