

# Your first night in Edinburgh

## A first word

We English have a single currency (£ Sterling) and a single set of bank notes. The Scots use the £ but have three different sets of bank notes (Clydesdale, Bank of Scotland and Royal Bank of Scotland). All of these notes are quite distinct and all are accepted in Edinburgh. However, the Scottish banknotes you take home \*may\* present you with difficulties when you are changing them back to your local currency.

## Getting from the airport to the city centre.

There are taxis available but will cost approx. £20 (\$30, €25) to the city centre. Taxi drivers usually expect a 10% tip.

A good alternative is the express bus. Bit of a misnomer “express” as it stops regularly. A recorded voice will tell you where you are – listen for Haymarket (towards the west of the city centre), Princess Street (city centre) and Waverley station (end of the line). Tickets cost £3.50 single or £6 return. Journey time 20+ minutes.

## Getting about

Buses are cheap and plentiful. A standard single journey cost £1.30. You drop the coins in the box by the driver as you board. Exact change is the rule and will cost you if you haven't got it. Black (London-style) taxis can be flagged down and are metered.

## Where to eat and drink

As you arrive from the airport you will pass numerous pubs and bars but may wonder where the restaurants are hidden. **Pubs first.** Walk up to the counter, catch the eye of the barman or barmaid and ask for a pint of Deuchars (a recommended local beer). A pint is about £3 to £4 city centre. Don't ask for a wee dram – instead ask for the whisky by name – as in a “small Glenfiddich” (or whatever). BTW – small is not very small – standard measures are 40 ml as opposed to 12 ml in Scandinavia. Wine comes in lots of sizes and a large glass of white wine will cost £5 and be 250 ml which is a third of a bottle.

**Where to drink** – if you are young or youthful, try Rose Street, George Street or the Grassmarket (bottled beer and music). These are immediately “behind” Princess Street heading towards the Firth. For a better drink try the Guildford Arms (near Waverley) which has a fine selection of Scottish and (the much better) English beer. Try the Standing Order for the architecture(!) on George Street. Most bars are open until 1100pm, some bars are open much longer.

**Where to eat:** bars serve food. This can range from an excellent gastronomic experience to “something<sup>1</sup> and chips”. You will pay accordingly. “... and chips” you can get for perhaps £10. Bars stop serving at 9.00pm which really means 8.30 pm. There are lots of good, reasonably priced Italian restaurants / pasta-pizza places on Hanover Street. Try Bar Venezia, Bar Napoli or La Lanterna. There are curry-houses<sup>2</sup> (Indian restaurants) on Rose Street. No real China town. There are lots of bars in the Grassmarket. Authentic Scottish food is very good and very expensive and you will have to book in advance. BTW – you will not find a deep fried Mars bar in the city centre.

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<sup>1</sup> This can be fish, haggis, pies of various kinds and lasagna (really).

<sup>2</sup> Try chicken tikka masala which is a genuine Scottish curry.