



The 2015 Edinburgh Military Tattoo

Home » Travel Blog » Tours of Scotland » The 2015 Edinburgh Military Tattoo



*"Hark, when the night is falling
Hear, hear the pipes are calling
Loudly and proudly calling down through the glen
There where the hills are sleeping
now feel the blood a leaping
high as the spirits of the old highland men . . ."*

from "Scotland the Brave" by Cliff Hanley

Are the bagpipes calling you to Scotland?

Many of our guests tell us they've been dreaming for years of visiting this mystical country's mountains and moors.

One way to immerse yourself in the entire Scottish experience is to organize your trip around the annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Considered one of the world's greatest shows, the Military Tattoo takes place in the "esplanade" or arena of Edinburgh Castle. The 117,600 square feet of this 12th Century fortress features a mix of towers, ramparts, ballrooms and royal apartments built on a basalt crag that is actually a volcanic plug.

Taking place from the 7th to 29th of August in 2015, the Tattoo features one astounding musical, ceremonial, or military display after another. After opening its doors to performers from outside Scotland decades ago, the Tattoo now hosts representatives from scores of different countries yearly. You're just as likely to hear New Orleans jazz, modern pop and folk music as the thrum of the bagpipe and drums. Most bands enrich their music with flag-wavers, drill teams, camels, elephants, Zulu dance, cavalry, motorcyclists, and more.

Founded in a military music tradition, the Tattoo opens and ends with rousing numbers from bagpipe and drum ensembles. Some, but not all, of the other countries rely on a military theme as well. The arena seats 7,700, so this intimate performance provides each spectator an ideal seat to drink in the culture and pride of this feisty member of the British Isles.

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo website has plenty of information about logistics, performances and tickets. Following its Facebook page ensures you will be reminded of this unforgettable performance backlit by a medieval castle.

Beyond the Tattoo: The Edinburgh International Festival

Most travelers consider the Edinburgh Royal Military Tattoo the centerpiece of The Edinburgh International Festival. Outside of the castle, however, from August 7th

through the 31st, the theaters, concert halls and parks of Edinburgh fill with opera, poetry reading, Shakespeare, symphony, comedy, art, and so much more. Events begin at 11:00 a.m. and continue all day, some ending in the "wee hours." What makes the Edinburgh International Festival so exciting is that the events are not all closed up inside buildings. Instead, colorful exciting action takes place all over the cobblestone streets.

Like the Milan Expo 2015, the Edinburgh International Festival doesn't just stick with Scottish or even British contributions to art, music and theater. Instead, it features top performers and artists from all over the world.

The Edinburgh International Festival is made up of several festivals. The biggest ones are:

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Percussionists, jugglers, and comedians compete with artists and dancers in Edinburgh's streets. Where professionals and others are scheduled into the concert halls and theaters, young, promising performers try their wares on the crowds walking by. Here you'll see famous actors from many continents walking the streets to reclaim the fire that once excited them about their profession. The event's video features many actors explaining that any young person who wants to build a career in the arts must come to see what others are doing. Edinburgh Fringe is a great adventure where performers stretch their abilities, try out new acts and connect with audiences on the most personal level possible. Stay up to date on artists booked and invited on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Facebook page here.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

While some race from ribbon dance to drum performance, the family's more bookish members can spend their days safely tucked in central Edinburgh's Charlotte Square Gardens. Book festival participants can listen to lectures from poets, comic creators, biographers, scientists, Nobel and Booker-prize winning authors, and many more. Book Festival organizers create a charming tented village in Edinburgh's heart with plenty of room to sit and relax under a tree to read, organize activities, and eat. Authors will be on hand to sign books and speak with book lovers. Lectures, book readings and meet-the-author events thrill those who wish they could live in a library.

Some of the 2015 featured names include: American novelist and short story writer Amy Bloom, contemporary Scottish novelist Alan Warner and Booker-Prize winning Irish writer Roddy Doyle. Watch Book Festival plans unfold via the Facebook page here.

Edinburgh International Mela

Finally! We get to the food aspect of the Edinburgh International Festival!

With haggis as Scotland's big contribution to the food spectrum, Scots cater to attendees by inviting international chefs and restaurants to the Festival. Get to know scores of dozens of other countries through their food.

While dishes are important, dance really holds center stage at the Mela. The organization aims to provide exposure to diverse cultures through amazing dances and other performances. With exposure to unique cultures, citizens of the world gain greater understanding and appreciation for them. The Mela Facebook page keeps you up to date on calls for dancers and other performers as well as tips for enjoying the festival.

Add a Gourmet Tour to Your Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

If you've always wanted to attend the Edinburgh Tattoo, make this your year to finally get to the rolling hills of Scotland. Spend time at all the Edinburgh International Festivals, tour a bit on your own and then join us September 14 – 29 for our Small Group Tour of Ireland and Scotland. There are still a few spots left.

Our Ireland and Scotland tour includes 6 nights in Scotland and 8 nights in Ireland's elegant country houses and inns. We've found the most unique cultural experiences and will whisk you from one to the next in our comfortable, air-conditioned mini-buses. A stop or two at a "singing pub" gets you into the local experience.

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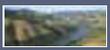
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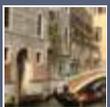


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