

landfall

LANDFALL SCOTLAND · AREA GUIDE

Living in Edinburgh

A capital city small enough to walk across, with the best US flight links in Scotland.

AVERAGE HOME PRICE

£301,000

City of Edinburgh, Aug 2026. Scotland: £198,000

AVERAGE RENT

£1,596 a month

All property types, Q2 2026

DIRECT US FLIGHTS

Yes, year-round

New York, Chicago, Washington DC and more

TO LONDON BY TRAIN

About 4½ hours

From Edinburgh Waverley

Cover photo: Joss Broward / Unsplash

Edinburgh is a city of about half a million people with the feel of a much bigger place. It is home to the Scottish Parliament, a large finance and insurance sector, four universities and the world's biggest arts festival every August. Most Americans who move to Scotland start their search here.

The trade-off is cost. Edinburgh is the most expensive place to buy in Scotland, and rental competition is real. In return you get a walkable city with a beach, a hill in the middle and direct flights to the East Coast.

GOOD FOR

- Families who want independent school choice
- Frequent flyers to the US
- Car-free city living
- Finance, tech, government and university jobs

PROPERTY

Buying and renting

The average home in the City of Edinburgh sold for about £301,000 in August 2026, around half as much again as the Scottish average of £198,000. Flats in Victorian and Georgian tenements make up much of the central housing stock, and houses with gardens command a premium.

Most homes are sold at "offers over" a set price, often with a closing date for bids when there is competition. Your solicitor makes the offer for you, and the seller provides a Home Report (survey and valuation) up front. Our Scotland buying guide walks through it.

Renting first is the usual route for new arrivals. Average rents were about £1,596 a month in mid-2026, with growth now slowing. Good flats near the center still let quickly, so have references, proof of income and your deposit ready before you view.

BEFORE YOU COMMIT

- Budget for Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT), and the Additional Dwelling Supplement if you still own a US home.
- Check the council tax band: Edinburgh bands are on the city council website.
- Ask whether a flat is in a shared tenement with common repairs to pay for.

FAMILY & SCHOOLS

Schools and family life

State schools are allocated by catchment area, so the address you rent or buy decides your child's school. Popular catchments around Morningside, Bruntsfield and Stockbridge push up prices nearby.

Edinburgh also has the highest share of independent school pupils in the UK: around one pupil in four. Most independent schools follow the Scottish curriculum (Nationals and Highers), and a few teach A-levels or the IB, which some American families prefer for US college applications.

Everyone under 22 who lives in Scotland can travel free on buses with a National Entitlement Card, which makes teenage independence much easier.

BEFORE YOU COMMIT

- Apply for school places through the City of Edinburgh Council once you have an address.
- Independent schools often have waiting lists: contact them before you move.
- Nurseries fill early in popular areas. Look as soon as you know your dates.



Victoria Street in Edinburgh's Old Town at dusk, lined with colorful shopfronts. Photo: jim Divine / Unsplash

SOCIAL LIFE

Culture, outdoors and going out

August is festival month: the Edinburgh International Festival, the Fringe and the Book Festival fill the city. Hogmanay at New Year is the other big moment. Locals either embrace it or plan a trip away.

Day to day, Edinburgh is an outdoor city. Arthur's Seat is a short climb from the Old Town, Portobello has a long sandy beach, and the Pentland Hills are a bus ride away. Rugby internationals at Murrayfield and two football clubs, Hearts and Hibs, give you plenty to follow.

TRAVEL

Getting around and getting home

Edinburgh Airport has more direct US flights than anywhere else in Scotland. Depending on the season there are flights to New York (JFK and Newark), Boston, Chicago, Washington DC, Atlanta and Philadelphia with United, Delta, American and JetBlue. United flies to Newark all year, and Delta is moving its JFK route to year-round from 2027.

The tram runs from the airport through the center to Leith and Newhaven, and the bus network is good. Many people live without a car. Trains to London take about four and a half hours, and Glasgow is under an hour away.

COMMUNITY

Finding your people

Edinburgh has the US Consulate General for Scotland and a long-running American community. The American Women's Club of Central Scotland, part of the worldwide FAWCO network, organizes social events, interest groups and charity work.

Most people find their circle through work, school gates, sports clubs and volunteering. Parkrun on Saturday mornings, a local community council or a hill-walking club are easy ways in.

WHERE TO LOOK

A starting shortlist

New Town & Stockbridge

Georgian streets, independent shops and a Sunday market. Mostly flats; walk to the center.

Bruntsfield, Marchmont & Morningside

Tenement flats and family houses on the south side, close to The Meadows and popular school catchments.

Leith & Portobello

Leith has the tram, restaurants and new-build flats. Portobello has the beach and a village feel.

Commuter towns

North Berwick and Musselburgh in East Lothian, or Linlithgow in West Lothian, for more space with a train into the city.

READ NEXT

Landfall guides for this move

How does buying a home in Scotland work?

yourlandfall.com/guides/buying-a-home-in-scotland

How does renting work in the UK?

yourlandfall.com/guides/renting-in-the-uk

How does Scottish income tax work?

yourlandfall.com/guides/scottish-income-tax

How do schools work in Scotland?

yourlandfall.com/guides/scottish-schools

See every step for your move. Answer five questions and get a free plan in the right order: yourlandfall.com/plan

Sources. Figures checked in November 2026. The Scottish average home price was £198,000 in August 2026. Prices and rents change, so check current listings before you decide.

- UK House Price Index Scotland: August 2026 (GOV.UK): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-for-august-2026/uk-house-price-index-scotland-august-2026
- ESPC: the Scottish rental market in Q2 2026 (Citylets data): https://espc.com/news/what-was-the-scottish-rental-market-like-in-q2-2026
- Edinburgh Airport: Delta to fly Edinburgh–New York year-round (Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce): https://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/delta-air-lines-to-edinburgh-to-new-york-year-round/
- List of private schools in Scotland (Wikipedia, citing SCIS): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_private_schools_in_Scotland
- Transport Scotland: free bus travel for under-22s and over-60s: https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/people-seeking-asylum/

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