

Edinburgh in 3 Days

Public transit only: buses, trams and walking | Costs for one adult in GBP

Fares used

- Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams city-zone adult single: **GBP 2.40**; city day ticket **GBP 6.00**.
- Tapping the same contactless card or phone on every ride caps the daily charge (reported as about GBP 5.70). Budgeted at **GBP 6.00 a day**.
- Attractions: Edinburgh Castle GBP 23.50 online; Palace of Holyroodhouse GBP 22 in advance; Royal Yacht Britannia GBP 21.
- Airport (optional, not in totals): tram single GBP 7.90 (return GBP 9.50) or Airlink 100 bus GBP 6.00 single.

Cost breakup

Category	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total
Public transit (daily contactless cap)	GBP 6.00	GBP 6.00	GBP 6.00	GBP 18.00
Attractions	GBP 23.50	GBP 43.00	GBP 0.00	GBP 66.50
Food (estimate)	GBP 30.00	GBP 30.00	GBP 30.00	GBP 90.00
Total	GBP 59.50	GBP 79.00	GBP 36.00	GBP 174.50

Food costs are estimates. Dropping Britannia lowers the total to about GBP 153.50.

Day 1: Old Town and Castle

Time	Plan	How to travel	Cost
9:00	Bus or tram into Princes Street, then visit Edinburgh Castle . Book the 9:30 slot online. Allow 2 to 2.5 hours.	Walk uphill from Princes Street, about 15 min.	GBP 23.50
12:00	Walk down the Royal Mile : St Giles' Cathedral (free, donations welcome) and the Old Town closes.	Walk.	Free
13:00	Lunch near Victoria Street or the Grassmarket.	Walk. Buses 9, 23, 27 also stop on Victoria Street.	~GBP 12
14:30	National Museum of Scotland (free). Go up to the roof terrace for views.	Walk about 10 min. Buses 35, 45 stop at the museum.	Free
16:30	Greyfriars Kirkyard , then onwards to Calton Hill for sunset.	Walk via South Bridge and North Bridge to Waterloo Place, about 20 min. Buses 15, 26, 44 stop near the hill (Regent Terrace).	Free
17:30	Calton Hill viewpoint at sunset.	Walk up from Waterloo Place.	Free
19:00	Dinner around Leith Walk or Broughton Street.	Walk down the Greenside path to the top of Leith Walk, about 10 to 15 min.	~GBP 18

Day 1 is mostly on foot, so expect 2 to 3 bus rides. The GBP 6 cap is a ceiling.

Day 2: Holyrood, Arthur's Seat and Leith

Time	Plan	How to travel	Cost
9:00	Palace of Holyroodhouse and the Abbey ruins. Allow 1.5 to 2 hours.	Bus 35 along the Royal Mile and Canongate to Holyrood.	GBP 22.00
11:30	Climb Arthur's Seat by the easy path from Holyrood Park. Allow about 1.5 hours.	Walk from the Palace.	Free
13:30	Lunch at The Shore, Leith.	Bus 35 from the Royal Mile near Canongate Kirk or the Scottish Parliament.	~GBP 12
15:00	Royal Yacht Britannia at Ocean Terminal. Allow about 2 hours.	Bus 10, 16, 34 or 35 . Buses 10, 34, 35 may stop on Melrose Drive, about a 0.2-mile walk to the entrance.	GBP 21.00
17:15	Return to the centre.	Bus 10 (to George Street) or 34 (to Princes Street).	
18:30	Dinner in the New Town or Stockbridge.	Walk, or use the Lothian Buses app.	~GBP 18

Check before you go: Britannia is listed as closed 9 and 10 October and 4, 5 and 6 November for building works. Trams may not be running to Ocean Terminal, so use buses.

Day 3: New Town, Dean Village, Stockbridge and the Botanic Garden

Time	Plan	How to travel	Cost
9:30	Bus or tram to Princes Street, then the Scottish National Gallery on The Mound (open 10am to 5pm, free). Allow 1.5 hours.	Walk from Princes Street.	Free
12:00	Walk through the New Town (George Street, Charlotte Square) to Dean Village .	Walk about 25 min, or buses 19, 22, 36, 37, 47 to the Dean Bridge stop on Queensferry Road.	
12:45	Wander Dean Village and the Water of Leith, then lunch in Stockbridge .	Walk along the river, about 15 min. Buses 24, 29 run along Kerr Street in Stockbridge.	~GBP 12
14:45	Royal Botanic Garden (free to walk around). Closes at 5pm in October. Glasshouses are charged separately and not budgeted.	Walk about 20 min from Stockbridge.	Free
17:00	Return to the centre.	Buses 8, 23 or 27 from Inverleith Row (cross the road for the city-bound stop).	
18:30	Dinner around George Street or Broughton Street.	Walk.	~GBP 18

Notes

- Bus 35 is the most useful single route: it serves the Royal Mile, the National Museum, Holyrood and Ocean Terminal.
- Route numbers come from timetable listings and venue pages. Confirm live stops in the Lothian Buses app before travelling.
- Prices and opening times change. Check the Castle, Holyrood and Britannia sites before booking.
- Not covered: Real Mary King's Close, the Vaults, the Portrait Gallery, Cramond and day trips.

Sources

edinburghtrams.com/news/changes-tram-fares-2026
lothianbuses.com (revised fares; Royal Week routes)
royalyachtbritannia.co.uk (travel by bus; find us)
blog.guruwalk.com (Castle and Holyrood prices, Aug 2026)
rbge.org.uk (Botanic Garden bus routes and hours)
bustimes.org (stops for the Old Town, Calton, South Side and Dean Bridge)
artuk.org (Scottish National Gallery hours and admission)