

British Culture 9 - Visit Scotland (Part 1)

Edinburgh



Edinburgh has been the capital of Scotland since 1999 again. It is the second most populous city of the country. The Scottish capital is an important cultural and scientific centre, as well as the second most important centre of finance after London.

During the 19th century, Edinburgh was called 'Auld Reekie' because of the smoke from the steam engines and the pollution of the Industrial Revolution. Another nickname was 'the Athens of the North' because of the neoclassical style of some of its buildings and monuments.

The most famous street in Edinburgh is the Royal Mile which leads to Edinburgh Castle. Edinburgh Castle was built during the 12th century. It is situated on top of an extinct volcano.



When you visit the castle, you can see the Scottish Crown Jewels, also known as the Honours of Scotland. The crown was made in 1540. You can also admire the Stone of Destiny which has been used for coronation ceremonies for many centuries. In 1292, the Stone of Destiny was taken from Scotland to Westminster Abbey, in London by King Edward I of England. In 1950, four students took the Stone from Westminster Abbey for return to Scotland. The Stone was found a few months later. In 1996, Queen Elizabeth II allowed the Stone to be returned to Scotland, after 700 years.



Two other famous attractions at Edinburgh Castle are Mons Meg and the One o'clock Gun. Mons Meg is one of the oldest cannons in the world. It is over 550 years old. The One o'clock Gun is fired every day at 1 p.m. In the past, it was a time signal for ships.



Glasgow



Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland. The name 'Glasgow' comes from a Gaelic word which means 'Dear green place / space'. The bishopric of Glasgow was set up in the 12th century and the University of Glasgow was founded in the 15th century.

For a long time, Glasgow was known for its industry. The two phenomena that contributed to the boom of Glasgow were the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire. Products such as sugar, rum and tobacco arrived

at the port of Glasgow. Thanks to coal mining, iron manufacturing and heavy industry, the city soon became the biggest workshop for shipbuilding in the British Empire. The merchants who became rich started to invest their money in the textile industry. Many immigrants, especially from Ireland, came to Glasgow to find work. During WWII, the city became the centre of manufacturing ammunition.

Today, Glasgow is both an old and modern city, famous for its museums and art galleries. There are over 20 museums and art galleries in Glasgow. The biggest museum is Kelvingrove. It is the most popular UK museum outside London. As for the Burrell Collection, it is the largest private collection of artwork in the world.



Another thing this Scottish city is known for is its architecture. Glasgow's most famous architect is Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the founder of Art Nouveau.



Glasgow has recently started a regeneration programme with the construction of very modern buildings such as the Clyde Auditorium, also known as 'The Armadillo', and the Clyde Arc or 'The Squinty Bridge'.

Inverness

Inverness is the capital of the Highlands and it is also the northernmost city in the United Kingdom. It is situated on the river Ness.

Inverness was founded in the 6th century. The town was a stronghold (= a castle or place that is strongly built and difficult to attack) for the Picts.

There are about 40,000 inhabitants and the city is a major transport hub (= the most important and central part) for the region.

