

## HOW TO GET THERE, GET AROUND

**Climate:** Be prepared for cold winds, and heavy rain in Scotland, though the summer may offer beautiful sunny days. January and February are the coldest months with a maximum temperature of 6°C and a minimum of 1°C.

July and August are the warmest months with a minimum of 11°C and the maximum touching a balmy 18°C.

Edinburgh is well connected by air.

**Fares:** Tickets are available from travel agents but for a really good deal it is worth taking a look at the internet as that's where one can get the best deals. Amongst the cheapest airlines is the Royal Brunei where a Delhi-London return ticket could be obtained from about Rs 31,000. Onward from London to Edinburgh on GO airlines, a no frills subsidiary of British Airways could cost a reasonable 45 pounds for a return ticket..

**Accommodation:** The rock bottom rate would be 18 pounds for a single person for bed and breakfast for one night. Middle range prices would be in the region of 36 pounds to 96 pounds per person. Luxury hotels may charge about 105 to 120 pounds a night per person.

**Food:** Meals come from under five pounds a head to 35 pounds a head depending on the type of restaurant you choose. Scottish food is hearty, wholesome, and no fuss. They've perfected the art of porridge, sometimes flavoured with whisky, their best known produce!

**Sight seeing:** The Guide Friday Bus Tours where for a fixed charge one can ride in open air buses all through the day are a good way to see the city. The Lothian Region Transport also runs a similar service. Cycles are another good way to take in the sights.

### Useful telephone numbers:

Tourist Information

0131 473 3800

National Rail

0345 4849 50

Edinburgh Airport

0131 225 3858

Traveline Edinburgh

0131 225 3538

Freephone 0800 23 23 23

with rabble-rousing rhetoric, against the "auld enemy, the English", with a colourful evocation of the country's chequered past. The castle itself has colourful tableaux recreating important events in the country's history. There is a tiny cathedral just outside the castle where soldiers may hold their marriage receptions.

This is a particular favourite with the thrifty Scots we are informed because it has space for only 20 guests!

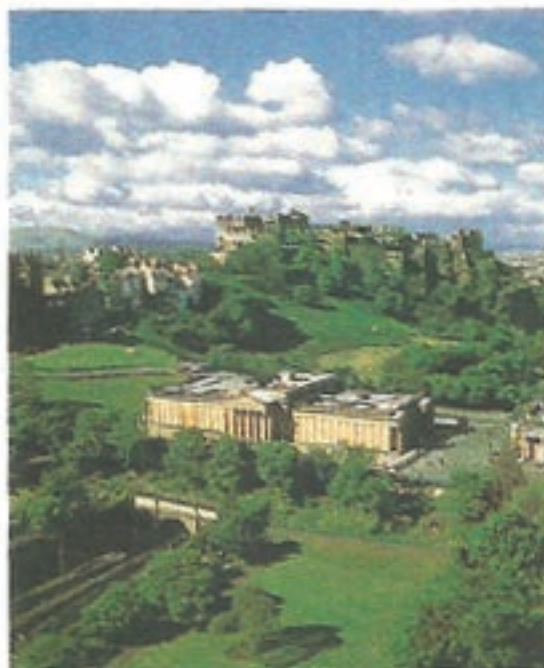
The city of Edinburgh owes its very name to this castle which was originally a Celtic hill fort. It was not only a safe haven for the Stuart kings but also the country's arsenal and protected the Scottish for over nine centuries. Edinburgh grew along the narrow ridge on which it is situated and became Scotland's capital in the fifteenth century. It was then that the Nor' Loch, where women were drowned as witches, was drained, to

later become the Princes Street Gardens. In the seventeenth century, the new town of Edinburgh was planned and by the end of the century, it was recognised as a city with considerable charm.

Its appeal endures. Holyrood Palace, with its baroque architecture is situated in incredibly romantic environs in the shadow of Arthur's Seat. It was once the home of Mary Queen of Scots and is today, the official residence of the Queen in Scotland.

The best time to see Edinburgh is probably in August when it plays host to a scintillating array of cultural events. But it is such an exciting city, it really is worth a visit at any time of the year. What a pity I wasn't able to climb up Arthur's Seat! But isn't this the home country of 'try again King Bruce'?

Some day I'm going to take a second chance. ■



View whew! Edinburgh from the Scott Monument

Photographs: Gitanjali Prasad