

Travelogue

Edinburgh is representative of the cultural and economic affluence of Scotland and provides for a great vacation away from home. Artists, businesspeople, general travellers, everyone will come back from this city, with their own unique and inspiring tales of travels and journeys

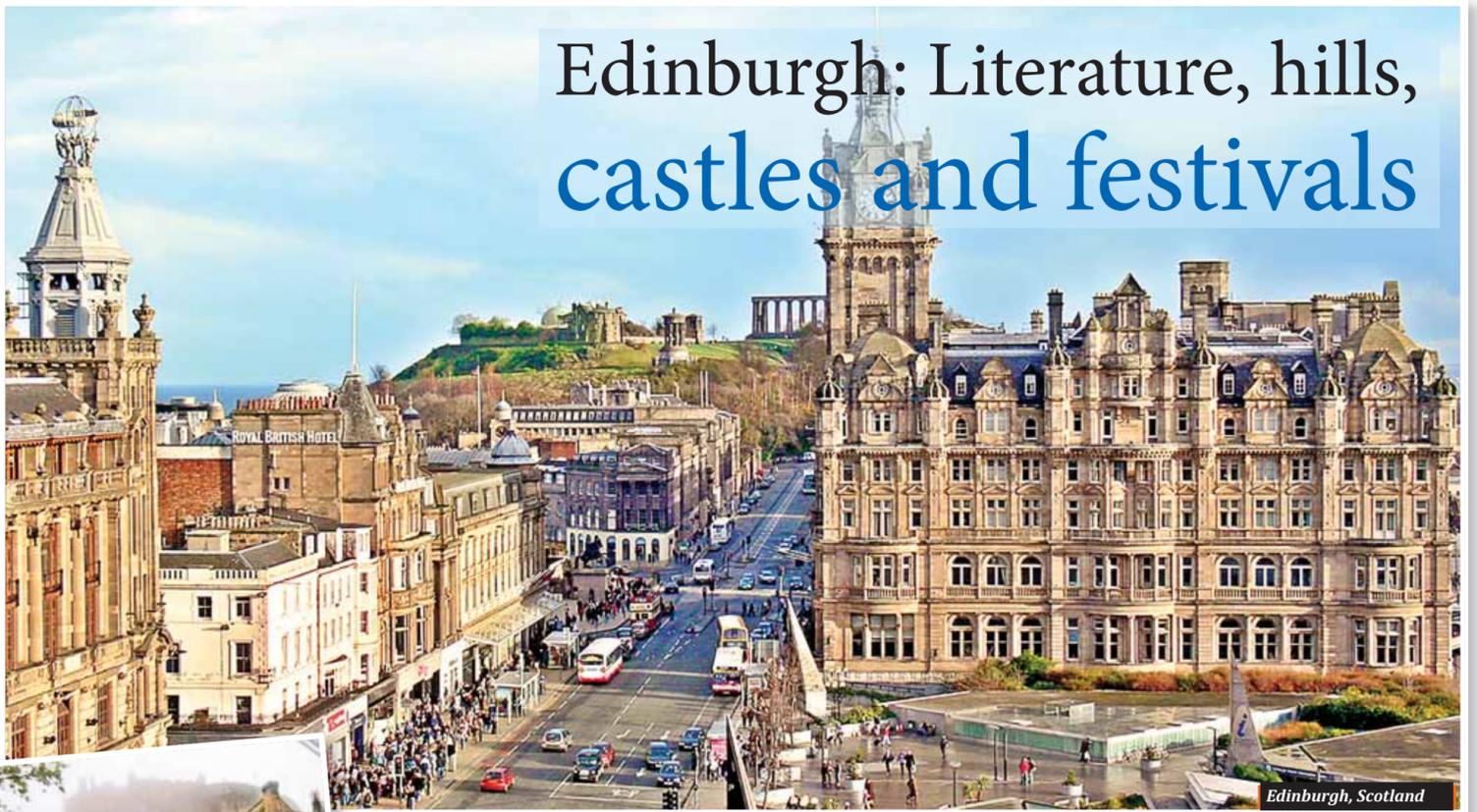
TRISHA BHATTACHARYA

This soul of Scotland nurtures music, art, drama, and other forms of creative expression, which is life-in-motion, in itself. Businesses, philosophy, the sciences, too, have found a suitable crevice to occupy here, which has led to the city becoming one of the most sought after travel destinations of the world. Known as the first UNESCO city of literature, and the Athens of the North, Edinburgh offers a wealth of opportunities to travellers, in the form of places to see, locations to find and gauge, experiences to assemble, artifacts, and beautiful natural resources, to admire and explore.

A thriving University atmosphere brings students here, from across the world, in the pursuit of knowledge and learning. Therefore, don't forget to pay a visit to the University of Edinburgh, the top university of Scotland, if you wish to learn some effects of student life on the city, and vice versa.

Smaller man-made dwellings, landscapes, and various on-goings in a vibrant city-life, amidst those, against a background of old forts, large citadels, and hills, is somewhat, the silhouette of Edinburgh. Upon hills, rest mammoth structures, one can gape at, and then there is the city-centre, where some of the hustle and bustle, takes place. Waterfront locations, green areas and parks, craft and vintage shops, wine shops, clubs, pubs, restaurants, smaller eating joints, music venues, and literary grounds, where get-togethers happen, and where poets and writers hold meetings, to share and exhibit their work, can be found here, in aplenty.

Not too far away from the city, is the coastline, and just a day-trip away, is the legend of Lochness. This otherworldly effect, along with the settling in-



Edinburgh, Scotland

Edinburgh: Literature, hills, castles and festivals



Edinburgh Castle

fluence of castles, museums, art galleries, and monuments, within the city, and bordering it, to gaze at, at dusk or dawn, are nature's sketches of the city and neighboring sights, in varied lights, and hues.

Preferably, book a place in advance, to stay in the city, which has a glowing reference from someone who has already been there, than an untried accom-

modation. The city has extreme weather, so, it is always a good idea to carry appropriate clothes with you, and also extra cash, for the city can get expensive. If you are on a tight budget, always make a list of the places you would like to eat at, hang out at, or simply see, keeping your monetary considerations in mind.

The International festival, the Fringe festival, and the Film festival, are some of the important festivals which take place in the city. The Fringe, which is the world's largest Arts festival, takes place every year, around August, in Edinburgh, and is a good time to visit here. It is a platform mainly for the performing arts, theatre and comedy, parts of which include music and dance, operas and some shows for children. All kinds of experimental art performances and shows are accepted in the Fringe, which may not be accepted in other conservative festivals around the world. Some of these shows are for free, and some are ticketed. Tourists from all around the world, in large numbers, travel to Edinburgh to attend this festival; a celebration, bringing vibrancy, normal and odd-portrayals of life, to locals and travellers.

Two lovely Indian women travellers, who have seen the city up-close, tell you what they feel about

the picturesque city:

Shivani Maheshwari, a senior trip coordinator at Enchanting Travels, Delhi, feels nostalgic about her trip to Edinburgh earlier, and shares, "Edinburgh is a beautiful city with extreme weather. A

rich European history amidst breathtaking landscapes is what Edinburgh is to me. This charming destination will take you back in time, leaving you mesmerised with impressions that will stay in

The historical European city presents myriad experiences for the young and the old. Providing stunning backdrop to real life stories, anecdotes and narratives, the city conjures immense enigma

your memories forever."

Sindhu Rajasekaran, Bharatnatyam danseuse and author of Kaleidoscopic Reflections, reminisces, and remarks upon the Fringe, saying, "Rarely does the sun come out in Edinburgh, when it does, it portends a grand time. It was one such occasion in August. And the usually empty lanes were suddenly filled with curious tourists and merry locals, gathering around German acrobats, Scottish bagpipers, actors holding Venetian masks, and street

dancers, trying to concentrate on one act at a time. The month of the Fringe Festival is eventful, not because it lavishes millions on pomp royal weddings, even a public lavatory is a stage in Edinburgh. Amidst all the revelry, one tends to forget the world beyond the serene hills of Scotland.

There were poets who read verses for those who cared to listen, standing atop any ledge which could gather attention. People sat on the unruffled grass of the meadows, drinking their beers, listening to a man faraway playing his guitar. There was complete pandemonium; one could easily be confused as to what to do with one's day. Bake sales galore, handcrafted gift articles, African beads, everything one could think of were sold on the roads. And then, there were comedy shows, every hour, everywhere."

Such narrations clearly suggest the wonderful impression Edinburgh leaves on travellers; so, getting a chance to be a part of such a potpourri of adventure, exploration and discoveries, must not be missed.

EAT HEALTHY

Jaggery, a plethora of nutrients!

Jaggery's nutritional benefits are mainly in the minerals. It is extremely high in potassium, which lowers your blood pressure and it also reduces the risk of forming gall stones

Jaggery is a traditional product from sugarcane, which was first used in 1631 and which is made in a natural way. According to Ayurveda, jaggery is as a healthy sweetener and is useful in combating various health related problems. It can vary from golden brown to dark brown in colour.



Naini Setalwad

sweet dish is puran poli which also contains jaggery as a sweetener in it. Water and a piece of jaggery is given to the guest arrived at home after coming from work in the rural parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Instead of a spoonful of sugar in your tea, simply add a spoonful of jaggery powder. This is an excellent, nutritious replacement which even adds a yummy flavour to your tea.

Jaggery contains a plethora of nutrients! Its nutritional benefits are mainly in the minerals. It is extremely high in potassium, which lowers your blood pressure and it also reduces the risk of forming gall stones. Jaggery is rich in calcium

too, which is great for the bones and children's growth. It is widely touted as a source of iron. Jaggery does, indeed, contain iron but not as much as it does calcium or potassium. Nonetheless, it is a better bet than white sugar for those battling anemia. Te magnesium content is also good for the mood and one's sleep cycle.

All over India, jaggery has religious significance to Hindus. Many festivals involve the offering to deities during their worship. It is eaten raw in before doing any kind of good work, some important meeting, or after some good news. It is also consumed with the green tea. It is also referred as Burmese chocolate.

Jaggery is mixed with peanuts, condensed milk, coconut and white sugar. Jaggery is usually made of

sugarcane as well as date palm tree. The coconut palm is also tapped for producing jaggery in west Bengal, South India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The kithul (caryota urens) trees which are widely used for jaggery production in Sri Lanka. It is known as gur in India and as panela in Mexico and South America. It is also known as gud mandi which is used as an ingredient in both sweets and savor dish in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Jaggery is used in almost all Indian staple foods.

(The writer is a Mumbai-based nutritionist, obesity and health consultant)



Gudpapdi

Ingredients

- 1 cup wheat flour
- ¼ cup cow's ghee
- 1 cup finely chopped jaggery
- 2 tsp milk
- 2 tbsp almond, crushed

Method

- Take ghee in a kadai and heat it.
- Once it melts add wheat flour and cook till it becomes little brown.
- As soon as it is brown close the flame and allow it to cool.
- After cooling add milk, jaggery and almonds to the flour and quickly mix all together.
- Put it in a flat plate and spread it evenly.
- After 5 minutes it will become firm, and then make square pieces.
- And serve.

Pet Chat

Dogs in Asia can be multilingual

NURY VITTACHI

Dogs in Asia can be multilingual, an animal welfare activist claims. "I speak to them in English and Hindi while the house staff addresses them in assorted tongues ranging from Bengali to Bhojpur," she said on a Delhi-based People for Animals website. "They respond to all of us with equal ease."

Not everyone is so lucky. My neighbour has dreadful trouble communicating with her dog, an uppity mongrel given to cryptic asides. This writer has noticed that the East Asians in my family have a very reserved attitude to all animals, probably not unrelated to the fact they are imagining what they taste like. But my South Asian family members (mostly vegetarians) think of animals as nice furry people, like Italians, Mediterraneans and Greeks, but smaller and less obsessed with tax evasion.

Human-animal communications are on my mind since the King of Crows is on tour. This guy, Gautam Sapkota, holds outdoor meetings in Nepal. After his human audience has gathered, he shouts "Come and take a seat" in Crow (which is "Caw, caw, caw"). Hundreds of the large dark-feathered birds flock to the scene. Later, he says: "You can go now!" ("Caw, caw, caw") and off they fly. It's pretty cool. Gautam claims to be able to speak 251 bird dialects.

Mentioning this caused a reader to forward me news of an experiment done at Keio University, Tokyo. Researchers read Chinese and English translations of modern Japanese novels out loud to a group of captive birds. Yes, I know, it's unspeakably cruel, but that's science for you. By associating the books with various bird snack options, researchers concluded that birds could easily tell Chinese from English. Not sure how impressive that is, since even my uncles can do the same, as long as you don't ask them after 6 pm on Friday nights. The report did not say

Parisian poodles speak French, chow-chow dogs should be spoken to in Chinese, and chihuahuas understand Spanish, says Maneka Gandhi. But dogs in Asia, such as her own, are multilingual

which translation the birds favoured, but one can presumably look up their reviews on Amazon.



Dogs understand human language easily

The fact is, humans talk to their pets daily. My wife defines dogs "simple, appetite-driven creatures you can read like a book". No, wait. That's how she defines "men".

But anyway, our dog wanders in and out of rooms in our apartment and her barks, yelps, whines and looks can be easily translated. "Hi. I just stepped into this room to see if anyone in here might give me a snack." One minute later: "Hi. I just stepped into this room to see if anyone in here might give me a snack." Another minute later: "Hi. I just stepped into this room." Etc. That's pretty much my dog's whole life, except for when she's actually eating. Then there's a gap of maybe 20 seconds before the basic pattern starts again. "Hi, I just stepped into this room." Etc.

(The writer is an Asia-based frequent traveller)