PRINTABLE ITINERARY

3-Day Edinburgh Day-Trip Itinerary

From our guide **Top 10 Day Trips from Edinburgh**. Print it or save it to your phone.



One day:

Go to Stirling. Do the castle in the morning and the Old Town in the afternoon, adding the Wallace Monument if you still have energy.

Two days:

Spend day one in Stirling, stopping at Linlithgow on the way back since it's on the same rail line. On day two, choose between North Berwick or the Borders Railway to Melrose and Abbotsford.

Three days:

Add a Highland tour on day three, either Loch Lomond and the Trossachs or a full Glencoe day. Or swap the coach for St Andrews.

The 10 places at a glance

1. Stirling

How to get there: Direct ScotRail trains from Edinburgh Waverley take under an hour. The castle is about half a mile uphill from the station; its car park is closed to most cars.
How long to spend: A full day with the Wallace Monument; half a day for the castle alone.
Best time to go: Arrive for castle opening time. Tour groups tend to build from late morning.
Tip: Book castle tickets online, where Historic Environment Scotland offers a discount for visitors arriving car-free. The Wallace Monument is a bus ride (services 52 and UL from Goosecroft Road) rather than a stroll from town.
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2. St Andrews

How to get there: Take the train from Edinburgh Waverley to Leuchars (around an hour), then the frequent local bus or a taxi for the last few miles. There is no railway station in St Andrews itself.
How long to spend: A full day. The journey is longer than it looks on a map.
Best time to go: Late morning to late afternoon, leaving time for a beach walk before you head back.
Tip: The castle's underground siege mine and countermine, and St Rule's Tower at the cathedral, have been closed for maintenance recently, so check with Historic Environment Scotland before you go if they matter to you.
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3. Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

How to get there: By train to Balloch with a change on the way, usually around Glasgow; allow around two hours each way. Many coach tours from Edinburgh combine Loch Lomond with the Trossachs and Stirling.
How long to spend: A full day.
Best time to go: Morning, before the roads and Luss car parks fill up.
Tip: If you want Loch Katrine as well as Loch Lomond, book a tour or hire a car. Doing both by public transport in one day is not realistic.
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4. The Falkirk Wheel and The Kelpies

How to get there: Trains from Edinburgh to Falkirk take under an hour; local buses link the town to The Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel.
How long to spend: Half a day for both sites, or a relaxed full day with a boat trip.
Best time to go: Late afternoon at The Kelpies for softer light and fewer people.
Tip: Boat trip places are limited and can sell out at busy times, so book ahead and check the timetable before you travel if riding the wheel matters to you.
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5. Linlithgow Palace

How to get there: Frequent trains from Edinburgh Waverley take around 20 minutes. The palace is a short walk from the station.
How long to spend: Two to three hours, or half a day with the loch walk.
Best time to go: Any time; mornings are quieter.
Tip: Book a timed ticket through Historic Environment Scotland's Linlithgow Palace page. Some rooms, including the king's bedchamber and the court kitchen, have been closed for conservation work, so check what's open before you go.
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6. North Berwick and Tantallon Castle

How to get there: Direct trains from Edinburgh Waverley to North Berwick take under an hour. Tantallon is a few miles further east by East Coast Buses service 120, taxi or a coastal walk.
How long to spend: A full day with Tantallon and a boat trip; half a day for the town and beach.
Best time to go: Late spring to early autumn, when the boat trips run and the gannets are on the Bass Rock.
Tip: Tantallon has shorter opening hours outside summer and some areas closed for conservation work, so check the Tantallon Castle page on Historic Environment Scotland and the bus timetable before you plan the trip out.
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7. Rosslyn Chapel

How to get there: Lothian Buses service 37 from Princes Street or North Bridge takes 45 to 60 minutes. Per Rosslyn Chapel's travel page, take one showing Penicuik/Deanburn via Roslin and get off by the Original Rosslyn Hotel. Parking is free if you drive.

How long to spend: Around two hours for the chapel, or half a day with Roslin Glen.

Best time to go: Weekdays are quieter than summer weekends.

Tip: Book a timed ticket online in advance, especially in summer, and remember the chapel is a working church that holds Sunday services and occasionally closes for events.

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8. Culross and Dunfermline

How to get there: Train from Edinburgh to Dunfermline (under an hour), then a Stagecoach bus from Dunfermline bus station to Culross. A car makes the trip much simpler.

How long to spend: A full day for both, or half a day for Culross alone.

Best time to go: Spring to autumn, with late morning at Culross and Dunfermline in the afternoon.

Tip: Culross Palace opens seasonally (its garden is open all year), the Carnegie museum closes in winter and Dunfermline Palace has been closed while the abbey stays open, so check before you go.

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9. Melrose and the Scottish Borders

How to get there: ScotRail's Borders Railway from Edinburgh Waverley to Tweedbank takes about an hour. Abbotsford is around a 20-minute signposted walk from the station; Melrose is under 2 miles away by riverside path or local bus.

How long to spend: A full day for Melrose and Abbotsford together.

Best time to go: March to December, when Abbotsford's house is open; start early to add an Eildon Hills walk.

Tip: Visit Abbotsford first, then walk along the Tweed to Melrose for the afternoon.

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10. Glencoe

How to get there: A guided tour from Edinburgh is the most practical option. Driving yourself takes around two and a half to three hours each way without stops.

How long to spend: A full day of 10 hours or more, much of it on the road.

Best time to go: Tours leave early in the morning; bring snacks and layers.

Tip: Choose a smaller-group tour if you can. They tend to stop more often and reach viewpoints that larger coaches can't.

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Getting around

Train: ScotRail runs services from Edinburgh Waverley to almost every place in this guide. ScotRail scrapped peak fares in 2025, so you no longer need to avoid early trains to get a fair price.

Bus: Lothian Buses covers the city and nearby areas, including Rosslyn Chapel, and contactless payment works on board. Rural buses in Fife, East Lothian and the Borders are run by other operators, so check the timetable for your route.

Opening times, prices and transport change often, so check with each venue or operator before you go. For the full guide, photos and FAQs, see https://toptravelinsider.com/top-10-day-trips-from-edinburgh/.