



Glasgow

POP 634,700

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Best Places to Stay

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Best Places to Eat

- » The Ubiquitous Chip (p125)
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Why Go?

Displaying a disarming blend of sophistication and earthiness, Scotland's biggest city has evolved over the last couple of decades to become one of Britain's most intriguing metropolises.

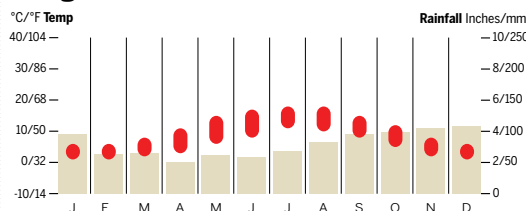
Its Victorian architectural legacy is now swamped with stylish bars, top-notch restaurants and a hedonistic club culture that will bring out your nocturnal instincts. Glasgow's pounding live-music scene is one of the best in Britain, accessible through countless venues dedicated to home-grown beats.

Museums and galleries abound, and the city's proud industrial and artistic heritage is innovatively displayed. Charles Rennie Mackintosh's sublime works dot the town, while the River Clyde, traditionally associated with the city's earthier side, is now a symbol of its renaissance.

Glaswegians are proud of their working-class background, black humour and leftist traditions. Glasgow combines style, edgy urbanity and the residents' legendary friendliness in a captivating blend that will leave you wanting more.

When to Go

Glasgow



Feb The drizzle won't lift? Maroon yourself in one of Glasgow's fabulous pubs or clubs.

Jun The West End Festival and the Jazz Festival make the city a music heaven.

Aug Glasgow is friendly at any time, but when the sun is shining there's no happier city in Britain.

History

Glasgow grew around the cathedral founded by St Kertigan, later to become St Mungo, in the 6th century. Unfortunately, with the exception of the cathedral, virtually nothing of the medieval city remains. It was swept away by the energetic people of a new age – the age of capitalism, the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire.

In the 18th century, much of the tobacco trade between Europe and the USA was routed through Glasgow and provided a great source of wealth. Even after the tobacco trade declined in the 19th century, the city continued to prosper as a centre of textile manufacturing, shipbuilding and the coal and steel industries. The outward appearance of prosperity, however, was tempered by the dire working conditions in the factories.

In the first half of the 20th century Glasgow was the centre of Britain's munitions industry, supplying arms and ships for the two world wars, in the second of which the city was carpet-bombed. In the postwar years, however, the port and heavy industries began to dwindle, and by the early 1970s the city looked doomed. Unlike in Edinburgh, the working-class residents of Glasgow had few alternatives when recession hit, and the city became synonymous with unemployment, economic depression and urban violence, centred around high-rise housing schemes such as the infamous Gorbals. More recently, urban development and a booming cultural sector have injected style and confidence into the city; though the standard of living remains low for Britain and life continues to be tough for many, the ongoing regeneration process gives grounds for optimism.

Sights

Glasgow's major sights are fairly evenly dispersed, with many found along the Clyde (the focus of a long-term regeneration program), in the leafy cathedral precinct in the East End and in the museum-rich South Side. Many museums are free. The centre also contains a variety of attractions, particularly Mackintoshania, while the trendy West End swarms with students during term time.

City Centre

The grid layout and pedestrian streets of the city centre make it easy to get around, and

there are many cafes and pubs that make good pit stops between attractions.

Glasgow School of Art

MACKINTOSH BUILDING

(Map p106; ☎0141-353 4526; www.gsa.ac.uk/tours; 167 Renfrew St; adult/child/family £8.75/7/24; ☀9.30am-6.30pm Apr-Sep, 10.30am-5pm Oct-Mar) Mackintosh's greatest building, the Glasgow School of Art, still fulfils its original function, so just follow the steady stream of eclectically dressed students up the hill to find it. It's hard not to be impressed by the thoroughness of the design; the architect's pencil seems to have shaped everything inside and outside the building. The interior is strikingly austere, with simple colour combinations (often just black and cream) and the uncomfortable-looking high-backed chairs for which Mackintosh is famous. The library, designed as an addition in 1907, is a masterpiece. The visitor entrance is at the side of the building on Dalhousie St; here you'll find a shop with a small but useful interpretative display. Excellent hour-long guided tours (roughly hourly in summer; 11am, 1pm and 3pm in winter) run by architecture students leave from here; this is the only way (apart from enrolling) you can visit the building's interior. They're worth booking by phone at busy times. Multilingual translations are available.

Gallery of Modern Art

GALLERY

(GoMA; Map p106; www.glasgowmuseums.com; Royal Exchange Sq; ☀10am-5pm Mon-Wed & Sat, to 8pm Thu, 11am-5pm Fri & Sun) Scotland's most popular contemporary art gallery features modern works from international artists, housed in a graceful neoclassical building. The original interior is used to make a daring, inventive art display. Social issues are a focal point of the museum but it's not all heavy going: there's a big effort made to keep the kids entertained.

Willow Tearooms

MACKINTOSH BUILDING

(Map p106; www.willowtearooms.co.uk; Mackintosh Building, 217 Sauchiehall St; ☀9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) Admirers of the great Mackintosh will love the Willow Tearooms, an authentic reconstruction of tearooms Mackintosh designed and furnished in the early 20th century for restaurateur Kate Cranston. You can relive the original splendour of this unique tearoom while admiring the architect's distinctive touch in just about every element; he had a free rein and even