

# EDINBURGH

## ENCOUNTER

NEIL WILSON

Edinburgh Encounter

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### Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote 'areas of interest' – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

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## NEIL WILSON

Neil was born in Glasgow but defected to the east at the age of 18 and has now lived in Edinburgh for more than 25 years. While studying at Edinburgh University he spent long, lazy summer afternoons exploring the closes, wynds, courtyards and backstreets of his adopted city. Since then he has continued to enjoy delving into Edinburgh's many hidden corners, taking a special interest in the city's pubs and restaurants. Neil has been a full-time writer and photographer since 1988 and has written more than 50 guidebooks for various publishers, including Lonely Planet's *Scotland* guide.



## NEIL'S THANKS

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## THE PHOTOGRAPHER

In the last 12 years, Will Salter has worked on assignment in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Antarctica and the Pacific. He has produced a body of award-winning work that includes evocative images of travel, portraits and sport. He sees photography as a privilege, a rare opportunity to become intimately involved in people's lives. Will lives near Melbourne, Australia, with his family. See [www.willsalter.com](http://www.willsalter.com).

**Our Readers** Many thanks to the travellers who wrote to us with helpful hints, useful advice and interesting anecdotes: Linda Bogaards, Signe Larsen, Evelyn Witt

**Cover photograph** People at old pubs along Grassmarket in Edinburgh © Chad Ehlers/Photolibary. **Internal photographs** p56, p94, p113 by Neil Wilson; p14–15 GLF/Imagebroker; p20 David Robertson/Alamy; p45 Scottish Viewpoint/Alamy. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images, and by Will Salter except p22 Karl Blackwell; p19 Bethune Carmichael; p13, p24, p115 Martin Moos; p6, p17, p21, p63, p67, p82, p142, p145, p148, p149 Jonathan Smith.

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Relaxing in the sunshine in Princes Street Gardens (p77), looking up at Edinburgh Castle (p40)

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# THIS IS EDINBURGH

You can always tell the character of a place by the nicknames it has earned. Appropriately enough for the city that inspired *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Edinburgh has two contradictory – but complementary – names.

The Athens of the North, a name inspired by the great thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, is a city of high culture and lofty ideals, of art and literature, philosophy and science. It is here that each summer the world's biggest arts festival rises, phoenixlike, from the ashes of last year's rave reviews and broken box-office records to produce yet another string of superlatives. And it is here, beneath the Greek temples of Calton Hill – Edinburgh's acropolis – that the Scottish Parliament sits again after a 300-year absence.

But Edinburgh is also Auld Reekie, an altogether earthier place that flicks an impudent finger at the pretensions of the literati. Auld Reekie is a city of loud, crowded pubs and decadent restaurants, late-night drinking and all-night parties, beer-fuelled poets and foul-mouthed comedians. And it's the city of Beltane, the pagan May Day festival where half-naked revellers dance in the flickering firelight of bonfires beneath the stony indifference of Calton Hill's pillared monuments.

With so many sides to its personality, Edinburgh is a city you'll want to visit again and again, savouring a different experience each time – the castle silhouetted against a blue spring sky with a yellow haze of daffodils misting the slopes below the esplanade; stumbling out of a late-night club into the pale gold of a summer dawn, with only the thrum of taxi tyres on cobblestones breaking the silence; and festival fireworks crackling in the night sky above Princes Street Gardens.

**Top** Monuments atop Calton Hill (p73), the 'acropolis' of Edinburgh **Bottom** Visitors to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (p25)