

Thursday, May 23

## Walking the City: Edinburgh

Edinburgh is a city like no other, where its history looms as large as the castle on top of Castle Hill. Edinburgh Castle is one of the oldest fortified locations in Europe and its strategic advantage is clear; anyone facing a siege of invaders will be able to see them coming for miles.

The Royal Mile meanders from the top of the hill to the bottom, starting at the castle and ending at Holyrood Palace, one of many residences of King Charles and the royal family. It's likely to be packed with people, some sightseeing and others shopping for tartanry. So don't be afraid to wander off the beaten path; there are cobbled closes and hidden gardens off various side streets. There are also lots of cafes, restaurants, and pubs, and quite often buskers and other street performers trying to draw a crowd.

We will arrive together at Waverley Station and walk to Old Town. Today, you are mostly free to explore and walk the city.

The one exception is the “Witches Old Town Walking Tour” which begins at 1:20 at 1 Parliament Square and 192 High Street. Led by a costumed guide (please let her occasionally cackle wickedly), we will “discover the wicked history of Scotland as we explore Edinburgh’s Old Town, from the streets above to its underground vaults.” Adjectives used to describe the tour range from “spooky” to “spellbinding.” How much will we



learn about women unjustly accused of witchcraft who met painful deaths? Who knows. But as we have previously, we'll be attuned to the ways in which we are addressed as spectators of the city, curious to learn more about its history. Also, I hope we have the real witch (who's clearly a lady historian having fun) and not the “sexy” witch from the online advertisement.

After the tour, we'll divide into smaller groups based on people's interests. If you don't know much about Scotland, I recommend the Museum of Scotland. If you love castles or the romantic misadventures of Mary Queen of Scots, Edinburgh Castle is your destination. Others may want to roam around Victoria Street and the Grassmarket, the University of Edinburgh, or hike up Arthur's Seat. Your choice. We ask only that you at least stay with one other person so you'll have someone with you when you make the return trip to Glasgow via train from Waverly.

#UKinMay assignment:

- Post an image with caption of “spooky,” “spellbinding,” or “sexy” Edinburgh!