

# Scotland Visitor Survey 2023

## Introduction

The Scotland Visitor Survey was conducted by Progressive Partnership on behalf of VisitScotland to enhance understanding of visitor behaviour and experience in Scotland. In total, 11,573 visitors were interviewed in Scotland between March and October 2023, with 3,011 responding to an online survey on their return home.

Overall, **1,156** overnight visitors to Edinburgh completed the online survey. The results shown below are based on these visitors to Edinburgh.

## Profile of overnight visitors to Edinburgh



**36% Domestic visitors**

- 3% Scotland (residents)
- 33% Rest of UK

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Edinburgh visitors 1,156*

**64% International visitors**

- 24% Europe
- 37% Long haul including:
  - 30% North America
  - 7% Australasia
  - 3% Rest of World



**Average number in travel party: 2.7**

**Children (under 16) in party: 27%**

*Base: Stage 2 online survey Edinburgh visitors 1,156*

**Life Stage**

Pre-nesters	17%
Families	9%
Older Independents	47%
Retirement Age	27%

*Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors excl. n/a 1,141*

## Profile of trip



Edinburgh visitors stayed on average 8.7 nights in total in Scotland including 3.5 nights in Edinburgh

*Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors 1,156*



23% of visitors to Edinburgh stayed only in Edinburgh (i.e. did not stay elsewhere)



**First time visitor: 48%**  
**Repeat visitor: 52%**

Average proportion of first-time visitors to Scotland: 25% (Scotland-wide sample)

*Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors 1,156*

**Examples of Type of Trip**

- A trip of a lifetime: 15%
- A special holiday/short break: 30%

*Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors excl. Scotland residents 1,144*

## Reasons for choosing Scotland

Rank	Top ten reasons for choosing Scotland	Edinburgh sample
1	The scenery and landscape	70%
2	The history and culture	61%
3	Scotland's people	27%
4	Outdoor activities available	23%
5	My or my family's Scottish ancestry	22%
6	A Scottish attraction	22%
7	Visiting friends or family	21%
8	Scotland's food and drink	16%
9	An event or festival	14%
10	A particular experience found in Scotland	13%
Base: All visitors to Edinburgh (stage 2)		1,156

Rank	Top ten reasons for choosing Scotland	Scotland-wide sample
1	The scenery and landscape	70%
2	The history and culture	48%
3	Outdoor activities available	27%
4	Visiting friends or family	22%
5	Scotland's people	21%
6	A Scottish attraction	19%
7	My or my family's Scottish ancestry	16%
8	Scotland's food and drink	15%
9	It's easy to get to or close to home	15%
10	An event or festival	9%
Base: All visitors to Scotland (stage 2)		3,011

## Type of accommodation used in Edinburgh

**66% stayed in serviced accommodation**



**58%**

Hotel, motel, inn



**4%**

Guest house, B&B



**4%**

Serviced apartment

Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors (priority region) 616

**34% stayed in non-serviced accommodation**



**17%**

Self-catering/  
commercial non-serviced rentals



**13%**

Friend's or relative's home



**4%**

Camping, caravan, motorhome

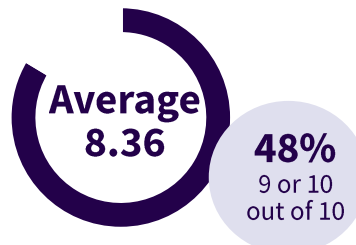
## Satisfaction with accommodation in Edinburgh

**Satisfaction with...** (Scored out of 10)



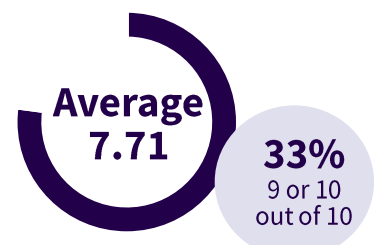
**Overall welcome provided to you**

Scotland-wide sample **62%**  
(9 or 10 out of 10)



**The knowledge of staff/host (at accommodation) about things to do in the area**

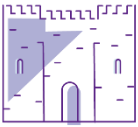
Scotland-wide sample **53%**  
(9 or 10 out of 10)



**The value for money of accommodation**

Scotland-wide sample **42%**  
(9 or 10 out of 10)

Attractions and activities undertaken in Edinburgh



Top 5 attractions or activities undertaken/visited in Edinburgh

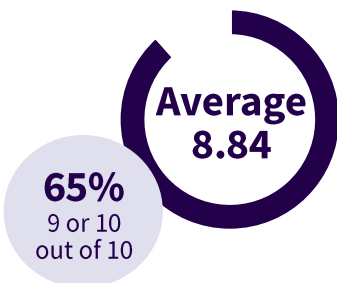
Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Edinburgh	Edinburgh sample
1	A castle or fort	61%
2	Viewed architecture and buildings	57%
3	A cathedral, church, abbey or other place of worship	50%
4	A museum or art gallery	50%
5	Shopping	47%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Edinburgh		610

Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Scotland	Scotland-wide sample
1	A castle or fort	59%
2	Viewed architecture and buildings	52%
3	A museum or art gallery	50%
4	A historic house, palace, stately home	49%
5	Shopping	47%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Scotland		3,011

Satisfaction with attractions in Edinburgh

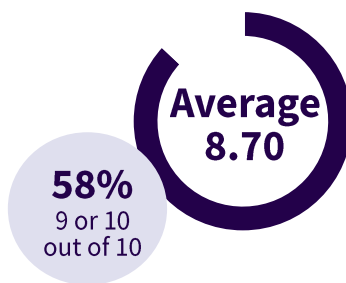
Satisfaction with... (Scored out of 10)

Knowledge and passion of the staff at attractions



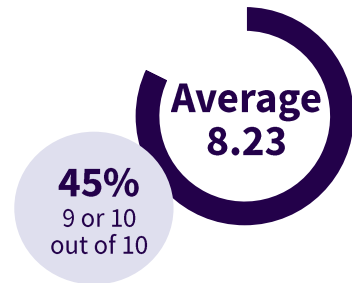
Scotland-wide sample 64%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)

Quality of experience at attractions



Scotland-wide sample 57%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)

Value for money of paid for attractions



Scotland-wide sample 47%  
(9 or 10 out of 10)

Base: Stage 2 Took part in activities/attractions in Edinburgh excl. n/a 580-599

**Food and drink experiences in Edinburgh**



**33% took part in food and/or drink experiences in Edinburgh**

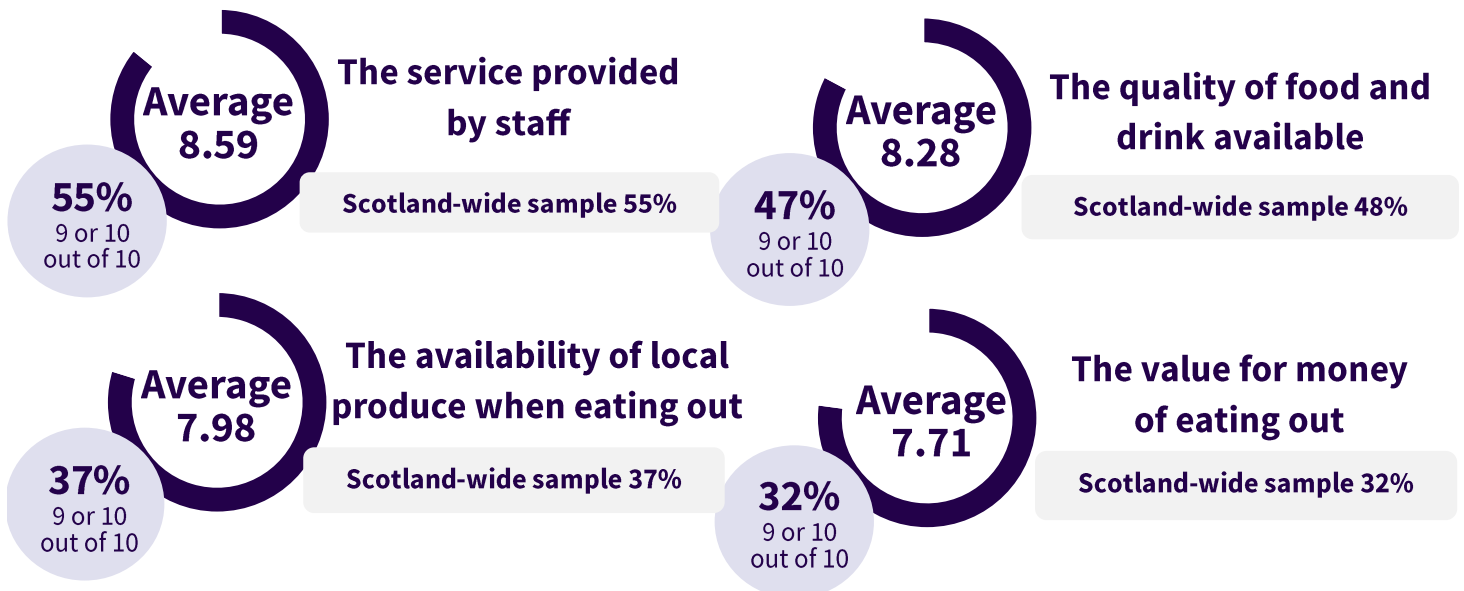
Key food and drink experiences included:

- 15% visited a fine dining restaurant
- 7% undertook a food or drink activity e.g. cookery class
- 6% visited a farm shop/farmers market

Base: Stage 2 Took part in activities/attractions in Edinburgh 610

**Satisfaction with food and drink experiences in Edinburgh**

*Satisfaction with..... (Scored out of 10)*



Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors excl. n/a 1,094-1,144

**Overall experience and likelihood to recommend Edinburgh**



Base: Stage 2 Edinburgh visitors (priority region) 616

## Appendix: Interpreting the results

- The Scotland Visitor Survey should not be viewed in isolation.
- The survey collates views on a wide range of topics to understand visitor attitudes and behaviours.
- This data supplements data on tourism in Scotland which is gathered by the annual statistical surveys undertaken at a national level by;
  - The Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) which estimates the volume and value of domestic tourism - from within Scotland and the rest of Great Britain
  - The International Passenger Survey (IPS) which provides details of tourism from abroad
- The Scotland Visitor Survey is undertaken during spring, summer and autumn seasons only, based on a need to gather visitor views in an efficient manner. This means the results reflect the views of those visiting Scotland between March and October 2023 only.
- The sample comprises leisure overnight visitors only, and as such the following are excluded: visitors on a day trip from home, those on a business trip, cruise ship visitors.
- The base size varies across questions. Visitors could have stayed in multiple locations, therefore the questionnaire was designed to ask specific questions about accommodation and satisfaction with their experience overall in up to two priority regions. Where the base size of 1,156 is used this includes all visitors who stayed in Edinburgh during their trip. Where the base size is 616 this shows results for the visitors who were allocated Edinburgh as their priority region and were asked more detailed questions. The base size refers to the unweighted base.
- Both face-to-face and online data were weighted to reflect the profile of visitors measured by the GBTS and the IPS.
- The Scotland Visitor Survey does not provide data on how many visits are made to Scotland or a specific region.
- Browse our [Scotland Visitor Survey page](#) on [visitscotland.org](#) for more information on this survey.

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