

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Small Group Tour

Reading List

How to be a Brit

by George Mikes

The indispensable manual for everyone who longs to attain True Britishness

George Mikes's perceptive best-seller provides a complete guide to the British Way of Life. Having been born in Hungary, he eventually spent more than forty years in the field, and the fruits of his labour include insights on important topics including the weather, how to be rude and how to panic quietly.

Loved by readers and authors alike, How to Be a Brit contains Mikes's three major works -- How to be an Alien, How to be Inimitable and How to be Decadent. If you're British, you'll love it; if you're a foreigner, you'll appreciate it.

How to plan a town: "Street names should be painted clearly and distinctly on large boards. Then hide these boards carefully."

Queuing: "An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one."

Sex: "Continental people have sex lives: the English have hot water bottles."

English humour for beginners

by George Mikes

If you want to succeed here you must be able to handle the English sense of humour.

So proclaims George Mikes' timeless exploration of this curious phenomenon. Whether it's understatement, self-deprecation or plain cruelty, the three elements he identifies as essential to our sense of humour, being witty here is a way of life.

Perfectly placed as an adopted Englishman himself, Mikes delivers his shrewd advice - helpfully divided into 'Theory' and 'Practice' - with a comic precision that does his chosen country proud. Drawing on a trove of examples from our rich comic canon, from Orwell ("Every joke is a tiny revolution") to Oscar Wilde, this is the essential handbook for natives and foreigners alike.

Mrs Kennedy: "I don't think, Mr Churchill, that I have told you anything about my grandchildren."

Winston Churchill: "For which, madam, I am infinitely grateful."

The Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide: How to Make Your Show A Success

by Mark Fisher

'Ah! The Fringe! I can't think of a more delightful way of putting my liver, bank account, relationship, complexion, and mental stability under the greatest strain they've ever known!' Mel Giedroyc

It is the world's largest arts festival, attracting everyone from student first-timers to Hollywood stars. Thrilling, inspiring and bewildering in equal measure, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe can make you a star or break your bank.

So what is the secret of making it work for you?

The Edinburgh Fringe Survival Guide draws on the experiences of the festival's leading figures - their disasters as well as their triumphs - to take you step by step through the process of making your show a success in the Scottish capital.

From choosing a venue to keeping on top of the budget, from sorting out accommodation to securing the best press coverage, from generating word of mouth to making the most of a hit, this unique practical guide for performers, directors and producers helps you get your show the audience it deserves.

Among those sharing their expert advice are playwright Simon Stephens, comedian Phil Nichol, actor Siobhan Redmond, producer Guy Masterson, Tiger Lillies front man Martyn Jacques, theatre critic Lyn Gardner, Foster's Edinburgh Comedy Award director Nica Burns, as well as the directors of all the major Fringe venues, top press officers, international promoters and insiders from the Fringe Society itself.

The foreword is written by playwright Mark Ravenhill.

Cracking The Fringe: Your balls-out guide to taking on the Edinburgh Fringe

by Jon Gracey

Ever dreamed of doing a show at the Edinburgh Fringe? Thousands have done it, and those thousands have made millions of mistakes. And while they'll tell you mistakes are part of the fun, they're really not. Mistakes suck. We know, because we've made them.

This is your guide to navigating the behemoth that is the Edinburgh Fringe - the biggest arts festival in the world, which attracts 20,000 performers each year. Whether you're a dancer, comedian, cabaret act, ventriloquist, juggler, playwright or all of the above, we're here to help with every aspect of preparing for and tackling the Fringe - plus we've backed up our knowledge by asking performers, producers, agents, press and venue staff for their best advice and top tips.

Learn to (amongst many other things):
Pick & book a venue
Flyer correctly
Network in Edinburgh
Stay healthy and sane for the month!
Prepare and distribute your publicity
Organise your get in
Get the best accommodation and transport
And lots more.

Your Fringe experience starts here.

Featuring advice and tips from Nick Helm (BBC, Edinburgh Comedy Award Nominee), Cariad Lloyd (BBC Radio 4, Channel 4, BBC3, Edinburgh Comedy Award Nominee), Benny Davis (Axis Of Awesome, creator of smash hit 4 Chords Song) and many, many more.

Off the Mic: The World's Best Stand-Up Comedians Get Serious About Comedy (Performance Books)

by Deborah Frances-White & Marsha Shandur

What is it to be a stand-up comedian? To be funny, solo? You have no character-role, no double-act partner, and nowhere to look but out into the darkness, with just a microphone, an audience and your imagination.

This is a job without an annual appraisal; a job where you are publicly appraised every ten seconds. The results are harsh and obvious: if the audience isn't laughing, you 'died'; if they can't stop, you 'killed'.

Deborah Frances-White and Marsha Shandur unpack the inner-workings of the minds of comics, sharing their secrets, insecurities and successes; their *bÃates noires* and their biggest fears. Featuring interviews with a host of comedians including Eddie Izzard, Moshe Kasher, Sarah Millican, Jim Jeffries, Stewart Lee, Lewis Black, Jenny Eclair, Todd Barry, Richard Herring, Marc Maron, Stephen K Amos, Rich Hall, Zoe Lyons, Marcus Brigstocke, Phill Jupitus, Gary Delaney, Mark Watson, Greg Davies and many more, this excellent book lets you in to the hearts and minds of celebrated comedians, away from the stage and off the mic.

Edinburgh: A History of the City

by Michael Fry

The late poet laureate, Sir John Betjeman, said that Edinburgh was the most beautiful city in Europe. Like some other great cities it is set on seven hills. But only one of these, Rome, rivals Edinburgh in matching the beauty of its setting with the stateliness of its buildings. A romantic landscape of sea and hills, broad vistas and hidden corners is embellished by a style of architecture combining stern classicism with antiquarian whimsy.

The Town Below the Ground: Edinburgh's Legendary Underground City

by Jan-Andrew Henderson

Below Scotland's capital, hidden for almost two centuries, is a metropolis whose very existence was all but forgotten.

For almost 250 years, Edinburgh was surrounded by a giant defensive wall. Unable to expand the city's boundaries, the burgeoning population built over every inch of square space. And when there was no more room, they began to dig down . . .

Trapped in lives of poverty and crime, these subterranean dwellers existed in darkness and misery, ignored by the chroniclers of their time. It is only in the last few years that the shocking truth has begun to emerge about the sinister underground city.

Lost Edinburgh

by Hamish Coghill

From mean beginnings – 'wretched accommodation, no comfortable houses, no soft beds', visiting French knights complained in 1341 – the city of Edinburgh went on to become one of the architectural wonders of the world. But over the centuries many of those fine buildings have gone. The buildings which stood in the way of what was deemed progress are the heritage of Lost Edinburgh. Hamish Coghill sets out to trace many of the lost buildings and find out why they were doomed. Lavishly illustrated, *Lost Edinburgh* is a fascinating insight into an ever-changing cityscape.

Edinburgh in the 1950s: Ten Years that Changed a City

by Jack Gillon, David McLean, Fraser Parkinson

"Edinburgh in the 1950s: Ten Years that Changed a City" by Jack Gillon, David McLean & Fraser Parkinson looks at the city of [Edinburgh](#) during a decade in which, as the authors note in their introduction, Britain changed definitively and dramatically. This was a decade in which post-war

rationing gave way to an economic boom, and a decade in which the problems of Edinburgh's appalling slums were finally addressed, though not always in ways that were welcome at the time or appear wise when viewed with hindsight.

Secret Edinburgh

by Jack Gillon

Jack Gillon is a long term resident of Edinburgh and has worked as a Town Planner involved in the conservation of the city's heritage of historic buildings for around thirty years and has an extensive knowledge of the city's history and architecture. He writes extensively on the historical heritage of Scotland and has had several books published by Amberley."

A Walk Down Edinburgh's Royal Mile

by Eric Melvin

Writing in 1824, the author and future publisher Robert Chambers described Edinburgh as "a truly romantic place" and that for visitors it offered "a perfectly unique scene, and one which, once contemplated, was not easily to be forgotten." What the young Robert Chambers wrote some 200 years ago still holds true today for the thousands of local folk and visitors who walk down Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile. There can be few streets anywhere in the world that are so steeped in history. Stretching from the Castlehill lying in the shadow of the majestic Edinburgh Castle, then running down the quaintly named Lawnmarket, the Royal Mile then enters the ancient High Street itself before descending down the Canongate past the Scottish Parliament building and finally ending at the Royal Palace of Holyrood. For well over a 1000 years, the Royal Mile has been at the heart of Scotland's capital city. 'A Walk Down Edinburgh's Royal Mile' is intended both as a guide book for our many visitors and as an informative reference book for those, perhaps living far away as expatriate Scots, who have an interest in Edinburgh's unique story. 'A Walk Down Edinburgh's Royal Mile' will also take you off the historic street into some of the ancient closes and wynds which run north to the present-day New Town and south to the Grassmarket and the Cowgate. Many visitors on the Royal Mile pass these by unaware of their treasure trove of tales. Here you will find some of the best stories such as the marital problems of Lady Stair, the ill-luck of Deacon Brodie, the unsolved murder of Thomas Begbie the bank messenger and the murderous activities of the villainous Burke and Hare. The book will introduce you to some of the remarkable characters who have made this journey. Here you will meet such Scottish monarchs as Robert Bruce, James IV and Mary, Queen of Scots. They are joined by other iconic Scots such as Bonnie Prince Charlie, Sir Walter Scott, John Knox, Elsie Inglis and Robert Burns. Here too you will find an assortment of characters including a

notorious warlock, assassins, murderers, thieves, a servant boy roasted on a spit and a town councillor shot dead by a 10 years' old schoolboy. Your journey will introduce you to some colourful eccentrics including Lord Monboddo who first suggested our descent from apes and Hugo Arnot, the asthmatic lawyer, whose 'History of Edinburgh', published in 1779, gives us an invaluable account of the dramatic changes taking place in the city in the second half of the 18th century. Sharing your journey are some true Edinburgh 'local heroes' - George Drummond, six times elected as Lord Provost who was the driving inspiration behind the planned New Town; John Kay, the caricaturist who during a career that spanned more than 30 years from 1785 to 1807, has left us images and pen portraits of several hundred of his contemporaries who he observed from his little premises nestling behind St Giles Kirk, Sir William Chambers, another reforming Lord Provost and Sir Patrick Geddes the late 19th century conservationist who fought to preserve what little was left of the historic Old Town from civic destruction. Nor must we forget the celebrated 'Golden Age' of the late 18th century when Edinburgh rejoiced in the reputation of such intellectual giants as David Hume, Adam Smith, William Robertson, Adam Ferguson and James Hutton. What a cast of characters! 'A Walk Down Edinburgh's Royal Mile' draws from several contemporary sources in describing such events as the Great Fire of 1824 and the murder of David Rizzio, secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots. The book is generously illustrated with pictures of the Royal Mile as we can enjoy it today as well as contemporary prints and drawings. The book concludes with a bibliography and some suggestions for further reading. If you enjoy this book then why not continue your journey by purchasing the companion title 'A Walk Through Edinburgh's New Town.'
