

Summer in the city

The rules and regs of summer in Edinburgh by Student Ambassador Ruby.

I've always argued that Edinburgh is a city designed for 'bad' weather. The Old Town looks even more Gothic in the gloom, and no student's Instagram would be complete without a photo of Arthur's Seat surrounded by atmospheric sea mist called 'haar'. However, I'm also an advocate for staying in Edinburgh over the summer months so I've always chosen to take a summer job here, rather than head back to my family home, once exams are finished.

Over the past 3 years I think I've made every summer mistake possible, from getting sunburnt on the Meadows to promising myself I'll still revise if I go and sit outside. Some of these mistakes could be avoided with a bit more common sense, admittedly, but others you can only learn to avoid through trial and error. To give you a head start, I've decided to compile some of my hard-earned wisdom into some dos and don'ts. Enjoy!



The Meadows in bloom.

DO make the most of every sunny day

Summer in Edinburgh seems to always begin just as you're having to revise for exams or work to a deadline. "That's okay", you tell yourself, gazing wistfully out of the library window, "I'll work hard today and then I'll enjoy the sun at the weekend." Sensible, right? WRONG. What you'll quickly realise during your first summer in Edinburgh is that sunny days are glorious, but fleeting. The second the sun comes out you need to make the most of it, as it won't be there long!

DON'T burn the grass on the Meadows!

The Meadows is a large public park, located behind the University's Main Library. During the summer months it becomes the city's shared back garden and the epicentre of most students' social lives. Trying (and failing) to grill sausages over a disposable barbeque is a Meadows rite of passage and on a sunny day you'll see plenty of others doing the same. However, just as essential to this ritual as ketchup or hotdog buns are bricks to prop up your barbeque. Edinburgh residents are very fond of the Meadows and, therefore, very protective of it. A single blade of singed grass is enough to get you dirty looks ...



Sun, sea and sand at Dunbar.

DO head outside of town

By the time it gets to your first summer, you'll be feeling settled in Edinburgh. You'll have your preferred floor of the Main Library, a favourite coffee shop, and a fierce loyalty to a particular late-night chip shop. You'll be feeling more confident and at home, and exploration will probably have taken a back seat in favour of studying.

However, summer is the perfect time to recapture that spirit of adventure you had in Welcome Week! With no more deadlines to hold you back, consider heading outside of the city centre. Portobello Beach is just a bus ride away and has a wonderfully retro amusement arcade to enjoy if the weather starts to turn. Alternatively, Dunbar has stunning views and is easy to reach on the train.

DON'T try to get anywhere in a rush ...

It is often said that the city's population doubles in August thanks to tourism. Whether this is true or not, it certainly *feels* true as previously quiet streets become bustling. Not only is there more people, the crowds also move slowly. Whilst you've had weeks to admire Edinburgh, everyone else wants to stop and take photos every few steps. Unfortunately, I've never found a way to get around this problem – you just have to relax and add an extra half hour onto every journey time.

MAYBE get involved in the Fringe?



The Royal Mile during the

Fringe Festival.

I finish on a controversial one here – the Fringe seems to divide opinions. If you haven't heard of it, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is an arts festival which lasts for almost the entirety of August. There are thousands of shows and practically every spare room in Edinburgh becomes a temporary performance space. Fringe-haters complain about the crowds and the cost of a pint of beer being hiked, whilst Fringe-lovers can be found rushing from show to show and taking every flyer they are offered on the street.

I fall somewhere between the two. Yes, the Fringe is expensive but it's very easy for students to find part-time work. And, whilst the hours can be long and unsociable, working the Fringe is a great way to meet new people. The city does become very busy, but there's also the chance you'll spot a celebrity. Give it a go – it's right on your doorstep – then make up your own mind.