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Glasgow's Top 10

From Glasgow's dazzling variety of art and architecture to the wild natural beauty of the surrounding countryside, here, at a glance, are the top sights and activities of this fascinating Scottish city



▲ **Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum.** Discover the wonders of Victorian civic endeavour at this red-sandstone museum filled with compelling exhibits. See page 72.



▲ **Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.** It's adventures galore in this national park, dipping into Britain's largest lake, trekking and visiting beguiling villages. See page 104.

► **Glasgow culture and nightlife.** With its myriad music scenes, cutting-edge theatre and nightspots, Glasgow caters for everyone. See page 12.



▲ **Shopping.** Choose from swanky designers at Princes Square or speciality shops in the Merchant City and West End. See pages 54, 68 and 78.





▲ **Cathedral and Necropolis.**

Glasgow's impressive cathedral was founded in 1136, while the Necropolis provides spine-tingling moments amid crumbling temples and monuments. See pages 20 and 22.



▲ **Riverside Museum.** Glasgow's award-winning transport museum features buses, trams, trains, bikes and cars. See page 74.

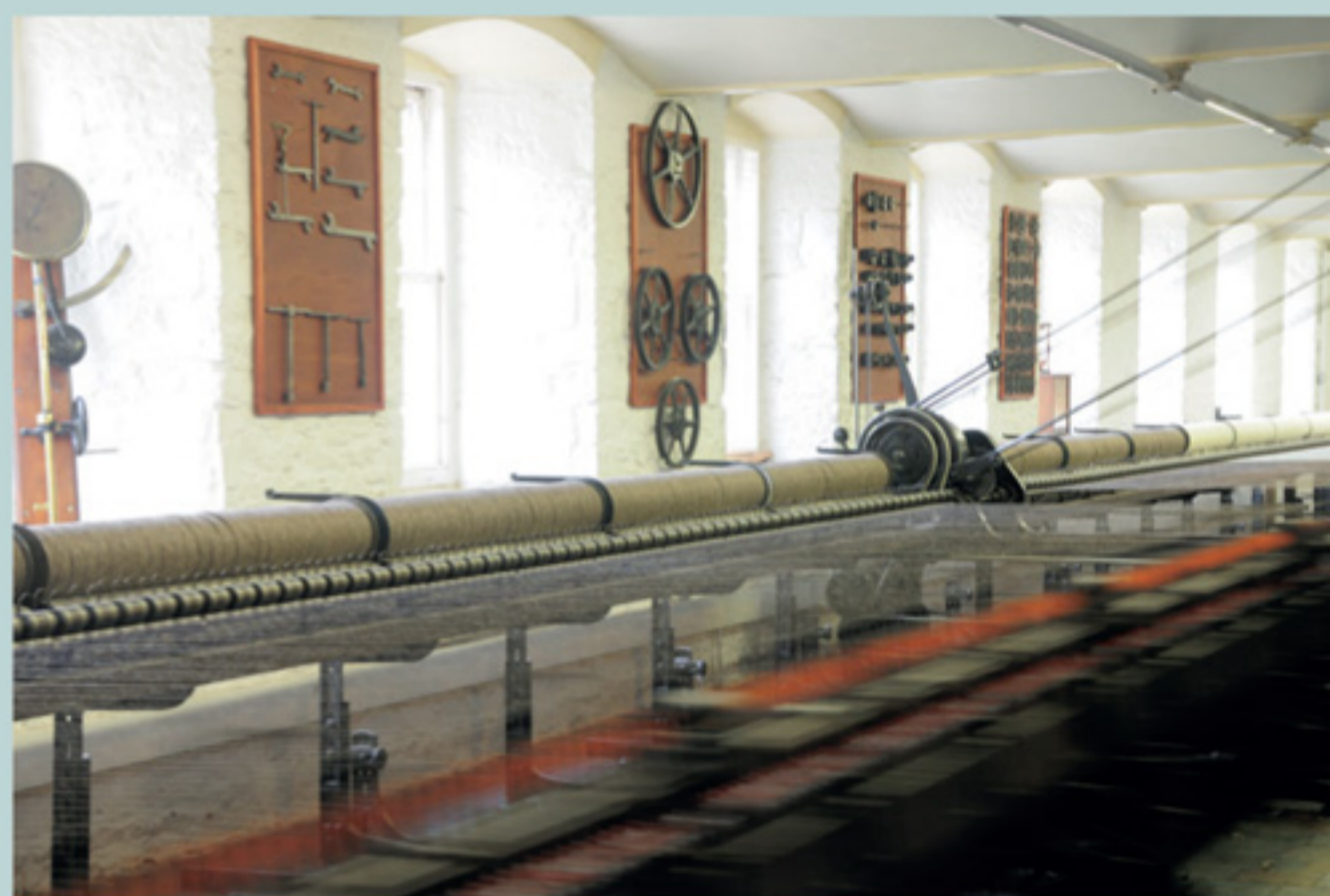


▲ **Burns Country.** On the trail of the Scottish bard, visiting Alloway Kirk's graveyard, Burns Cottage and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum. See page 110.

▼ **Pollok Estate.** A splendid mansion, riverside walks, biking trails, and the world-class Burrell Collection (closed 2016–19) make for a memorable Southside day. See page 88.



▼ **New Lanark.** David Dale and his son-in-law Robert Owen's model factory town is now a fascinating Unesco World Heritage Site. See page 109.



▼ **Glasgow arts scene.** The Gallery of Modern Art and assorted galleries give the city one of the world's most vibrant contemporary art scenes. See page 66.



The ornate façade of the Stock Exchange building.



Overview

The Art of Reinvention

Glasgow is a city continually in flux: its vibrant culture, and its grand architectural splendours of sandstone and steel make it sparkle despite dark urban realities

Glasgow is something of a Renaissance city. Like a proud fighter who refuses to be knocked down, this vibrant, bustling, rumbustious Scottish city continues to look forward. Born as a fishing village on the slopes above the

meandering River Clyde, Glasgow has been, in turn, a market town, an ecclesiastical centre, a seat of learning, a city of merchant adventurers, a gateway to the New World, an industrial powerhouse of the British Empire and a European cultural capital.



ARCHITECTURE

From the southern approach to the city, first impressions are not great. Despite some misguided 1960s urban planning – Brutalist tower blocks and the M8 motorway, which rips through the heart of the city – Glasgow is an architectural treasure house. Its mix of Victorian, Georgian, Venetian and Art Deco equals anything in Europe.

The city retained its grim face until well into the second half of the 20th



century, when the New Glasgow Society – a loose collection of early eco-warriors – led a rearguard action against the City Corporation’s policy of ‘If it’s old, knock it down’. Victorian tenement homes were stripped and refurbished instead of being demolished, revealing honey-and-red sandstone wonders and striking detail. The defining moments in Glasgow’s recent past were its selection in 1990 as European City of Culture and its hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

ECONOMY AND RENEWAL

The city set about reviving its fortunes with the bold regeneration of the inner-city riverbank. In 2011, the Zaha Hadid-designed Riverside Museum added to the shimmering riverside scene, along with the futuristic SSE Hydro venue, opened in 2013. Meanwhile, the Merchant City’s abandoned warehouses continue to be transformed into swanky apartments, businesses and restaurants. The Trongate 103 arts centre is at the heart of a plan

to regenerate run-down streets and connect the city with the Clyde, all part of the 2015 City Deal for Glasgow, a £400-million regeneration programme planned over the next decade.

Glasgow boasts some chic shopping centres, such as Princes Square, part of Glasgow’s so-called ‘Style Mile’. High-profile events including the biennial Glasgow International Festival continue to invigorate the city. Its reputation as a dour, violent slum is finally

The riverside is packed with striking buildings, such as the Science Centre.



being shaken off and Glaswegians are generally proud of the transformation.

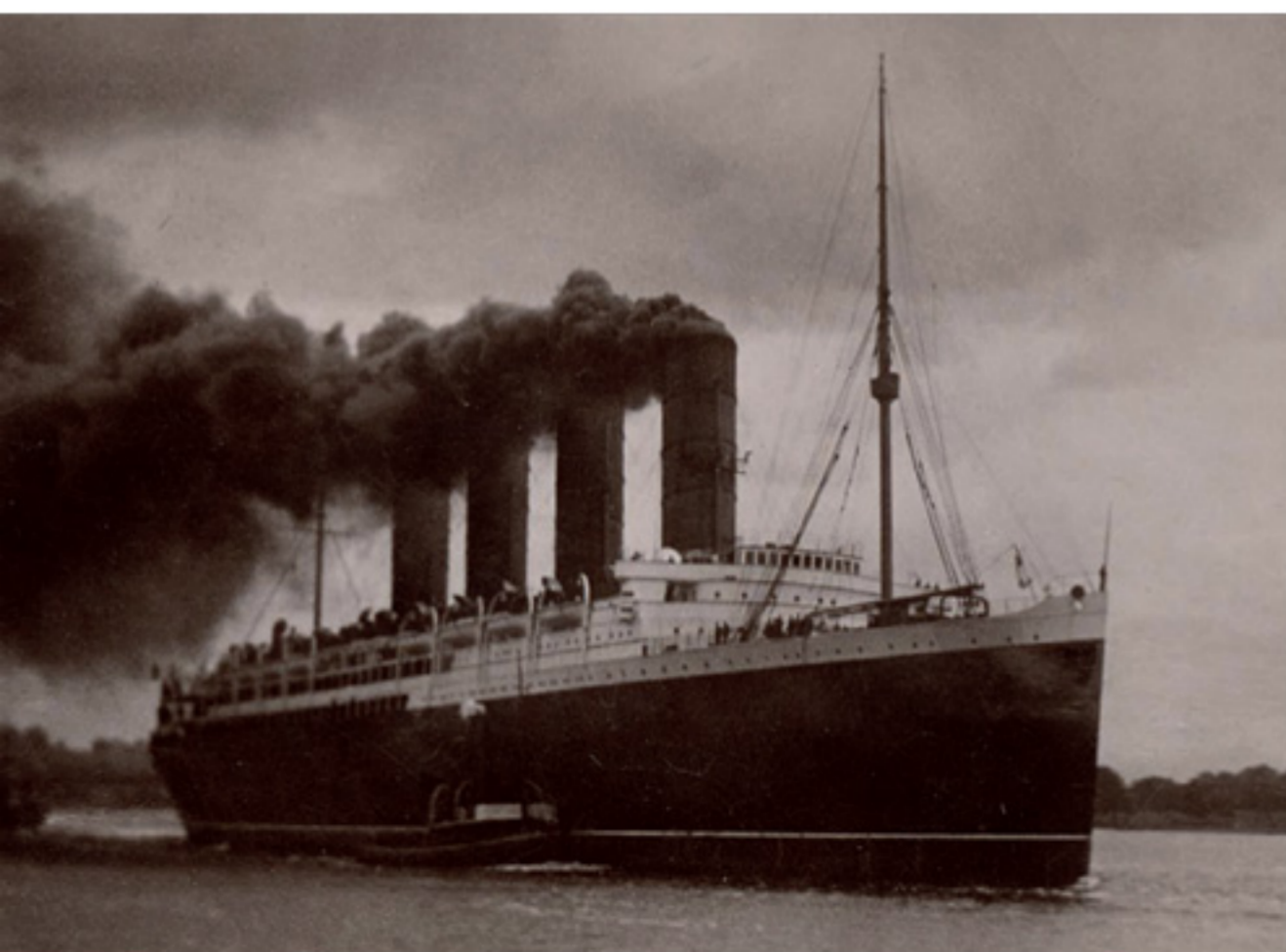
LOCATION

The city lies in the wide strath, or plain, of the River Clyde and is sheltered to the north, east and south by high, open ground; it's possible to be in rolling countryside 20 minutes' drive from the city centre. Glasgow is about 26 miles (42km) from the sea at Greenock, and the Clyde starts to widen into the Firth just below the Erskine Bridge at Old Kilpatrick. North of the city, the Campsie Fells rise to 1,900ft (580m) and are dramatically visible from many areas.

CLIMATE

The Gulf Stream warms the whole of the west coast of Scotland, and Glasgow is a beneficiary of more temperate weather than might be expected from its latitude. Winters are generally mild (between 0°C/32°F and 6°C/43°F) with more rain than snow, though cold snaps of as low as -24°C (-11°F) have been known. Summers, in common with the rest of Britain, appear to be growing warmer, with temperatures of up to 25°C (77°F).

However, the prevailing westerly winds that blow across the Atlantic bring with them their fair share of rain.



The doomed ocean liner RMS *Lusitania*, pictured here in 1907, was built in the Glasgow shipyards.



The grand Merchants' House in 1874.

A day that offers glorious sunshine in the morning can become a depression of drizzle by the early afternoon. Go prepared.

HISTORY OF TURMOIL

Glasgow was inhabited as long ago as 4000BC, when hunters pushed north in the wake of the retreating ice. From around AD 71 until c.211 the Romans failed to have overall control over Scotland, and their final retreat led to centuries of turmoil between warring tribes of Scots, Picts, Britons and Angles.

St Ninian began missionary work in Strathclyde in the 4th century, but St Mungo is credited as the founder of the city in AD543, although only legend bears witness to his arrival. Glasgow Cathedral was founded in 1136 on the site of St Mungo's Church on the banks of the Molendinar, a pretty *burn* (stream). Although the city was seen as a respectable seat of learning (Glasgow University was created in 1451), with strong religious traditions throughout the Middle Ages, all the political and military action took place in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Stirling.

INDUSTRIAL AWAKENING

The British Empire spawned Glasgow's development as an important port city. Civil engineer John Gol-

The People

Glaswegians stereotypically have a way with words, even if visitors have difficulty understanding them. The patter, sociologists argue, is a mix of native sharpness, Highland feyness, Jewish morbidity and the Irish *craic* (witty story-telling). Much of Glasgow's story has been harsh, and, in the past, raising a laugh served as an antidote to adversity. The shipyards of the 1960s, for example, have provided plenty of material for Glaswegian-born comedian, Billy Connolly.

borne's ingenious plan of the 1770s – to build piers along the banks and allow the river to scour its own bed – turned Glasgow into a serious contender as an Atlantic port.

The 'Tobacco Lords' were the first major merchants; many of their houses still stand. They created not only the tobacco trade with Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, but a merchant class. Their need for iron tools, glass, pottery and clothes to trade with the colonies was the impetus for the city's awakening to the Industrial Revolution.

Glasgow became a cotton town in 1780. Within a decade, scores of mills were using the fast-flowing Scottish rivers to power their looms, and immigrants from Ireland and the Highlands were flooding in. Glasgow's population exploded, from 23,500 in 1755 to a peak of 1,128,000 in 1939. The metal-bashing industries – shipbuilding, ironworks, armaments – were complemented by textiles, chemicals and manufacturing.

During the 20th century, Glasgow shared in the spoils and misfortunes of the industrialised world. Recent city administrations, however, have pragmatically courted private finance



Glaswegians are generally very quick and funny.

to unlock the city's post-industrial potential. New developments and regeneration projects have given the city a sense of civic pride, and Glasgow looks forward to a positive future as this forward-thinking continues.

Find our recommended restaurants at the end of each tour. Below is a price guide to help you make your choice.

Eating Out Price Guide

Two-course meal for one person, including a glass of wine.

£££ = over £45

££ = £25–45

£ = under £25

Guide to Coloured Boxes

Eating	This guide is dotted with coloured boxes providing additional practical and cultural information to make the most of your visit. Here is a guide to the coding system.
Fact	
Green	
Kids	
Shopping	
View	