



Mercat Tours - History Walks and Ghost Tours

28 Blair Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1QR

013 1225 5445 (tel:013 1225 5445)

Send email (<mailto:info@mercattours.com>)

Visit website (<https://www.mercattours.com>)



Access Guide



Photos



1



2

Introduction - Walking Tours

- Mercat Tours provide guided walking tours in the centre of Edinburgh based around the Royal Mile and the Old City and Castle, starting at the Mercat Cross on the Royal Mile.

The Mercat Cross is located opposite the City Chambers, to the rear of St Giles' Cathedral.

- Tickets for tours may be obtained from staff at the Mercat Cross site, outside the Mercat Tours office in Blairs Street via a self-service touch screen, or in advance on-line via the Mercat Tours website.
- Complimentary carer tickets are available.
- Tours which are more accessible include the History Walks Secrets of Edinburgh's Royal Mile and Treasure of the Old Town. Other History Walks with limited accessibility include Edinburgh Outlander Experience, Whisky Tour and Tasting (including tasting at the Underground Cellar at Blair Street), and Historic Underground, which include the Blair Street Underground Vaults.
- The Ghost Tours, which include the Blair Street Underground Vaults, include Ghostly Underground, Hidden and Haunted (adults only), Doomed, Dead & Buried (adults only), Evening of Ghosts and Ghouls, and Gory Stories: The Kid's Tour.

Parking



Photos



1



2

-
- This venue does not have a car park.
 - Nearby parking includes: standard on-street parking.
 - There is not a designated drop-off point.
 - There is Pay and Display parking on Blair Street and other surrounding streets. There are no Blue Badge bays, but Blue Badge holders may park for free in designated pay and display parking zones.

There are no dropped kerbs near the vaults in Blair Street and the paving is uneven.

The nearest public car park is the NCP Edinburgh Holyrood Road.

Public Transport

- There is not a bus stop within approximately 150m of the venue.
- The nearest main bus stops to the start of the walking tours at Mercat Cross are on North Bridge, served by Lothian Buses 3, 5, 7, 8, 14, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 45, 47, 49, Perryman's 51, 52, and First Bus X95. There are alternative bus services on George IV Bridge: Lothian Buses 23, 27, 41, 42.
- The nearest train station is Edinburgh Waverley Station.
- The nearest tram station is St Andrews Square.

Route Guide - Blair Street to Mercat Cross



Photos



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



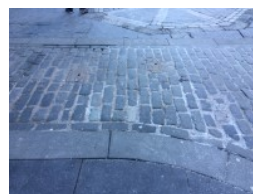
12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20

- Directions to the Mercat Cross from the Blair Street Office and Underground Vaults:- From the Blair Street Underground Vaults, turn right to go up the hill (photographs 1 and 2). The slope on Blair Street is steep. The pavement is paved with slabs that are uneven in places. The width of the pavement is reduced in parts by bins, signposts, and other street furniture.
- Continue approximately 60 metres to the corner by The Tron Comedy venue, where the road turns to the right (photographs 3 to 5).
- At this corner there is a deep kerb to either side of the road and an uneven cobbled road surface. It is not advised for anyone with mobility or visual impairment to cross at this point.
- Turn right to follow Blair Street to the junction with South Bridge, approximately 20 metres (photograph 6). The pavement is paved with slabs that are cracked and uneven in parts. The slope at this section is almost level.

At the junction turn left to cross over Blair Street (photograph 7).

- The road is raised at this point with level kerbs and well-pointed blocks to make for a more even surface. There is tactile paving on each pavement marking the crossing point.
- After crossing, continue up South Bridge past the rear of Tron Kirk, approximately 40 metres, to the junction with High Street (photographs 8 to 9).

Blair Street is one way with vehicles approaching from the right.

- The pavement narrows to approximately 120cm with a drop kerb on the right. There is a slight slope up along this section.
- At High Street turn left to go up the Royal Mile (photograph 10). The pavement is broad with level kerbs, but some vehicles still access the roadway. This is marked by low unmarked bollards approximately 50cm high.

Continue up High Street, past Tron Kirk and Hunter Square on the left to the arched entranceway to the pedestrianised area of the High Street (Royal Mile) (photograph 11).

- Please note that High Street (Royal Mile) can become busy with pedestrians, particularly during the summer months and at festival times.
- Continue up High Street for 100 metres, past telephone boxes and the lion head water fountain to the Adam Smith monument and statue (photographs 12 to 16).
- The slope here is slight, with stone paving that may be uneven in parts. There are also uneven block paving areas at entrances (alleyways and pathways off the main road). The pavement is again lined by low bollards on the right, and occasionally by café seating areas on the left.
- At the Adam Smith statue, which is on the corner of the junction of High Street and Parliament Square, bear slightly left toward the rear of the cathedral. The Mercat Cross is directly ahead (photograph 17). To get to the Cross, there is a blocked paved roadway with unmarked 50cm high bollards to either side (photographs 18 to 19).
- The tour storytellers may be found in this area. Tickets may be purchased from the storytellers.
- There is bench seating at the sides of parliament square (photograph 20).

Walking Tour (Secrets of Edinburgh's Royal Mile)

Photos



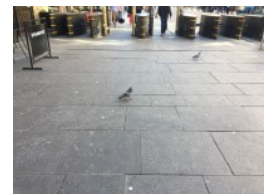
1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8





13



14



15



16



17



18



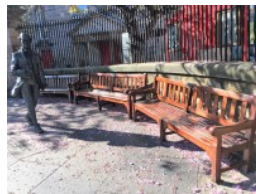
19



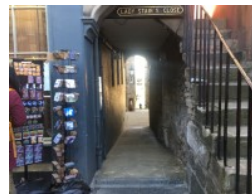
20



21



22



23



24



25

-
- The tour takes approximately 1.5 hours.
 - **For information about Mercat Tours - History Walks please click here**
<https://www.mercattours.com/tours/history-walks>.
 - The tour takes place during daytime hours.
 - The route includes the following surfaces: cobbled, concrete, block paving, paving slabs and gravel.
 - Some of the tour contains steep gradients.
 - These can be found in the following area(s): High Street and Blair Street.
 - The tour can be adapted.
 - Tour information includes the following formats: audio description.
 - A portable hearing loop or headset is available.

- The tour route travels through areas which are busy with traffic and pedestrians.
- The tour enters venues along the route with a mix of step-free and stepped access and doors widths over 75cm.
- There are no toilet facilities along the tour route.

- All tours begin at the Mercat Cross at the rear of St Giles Cathedral on the High Street section of the Royal Mile.

The tour described is the Secrets of Edinburgh's Royal Mile tour which focuses on the upper end of the Royal Mile toward Edinburgh Castle. This tour can be upgraded to include Edinburgh Castle, which will add approximately a further 45 minutes duration.

The Secrets of the Old Town tour is similar focusing mainly on the lower end of the Royal Mile around Canongate toward the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

The tour can be upgraded to include the Palace.

Other tours include Edinburgh Outlander Experience, Whisky Tour and Tasting (including tasting at the Underground Cellar at Blair Street), and Historic Underground, which include the Blair Street Underground Vaults.

The Ghost Tours, which include the Blair Street Underground Vaults, include Ghostly Underground, Hidden and Haunted (adults only), Doomed, Dead & Buried (adults only), Evening of Ghosts and Ghouls, and Gory Stories: The Kid's Tour.

Some tours will involve steep sections or steps, but the tours can be adapted by the tour guides to provide an alternative accessible route. Please advise Storytellers of particular requirements at the start of the tour.

Walking aids and stick stools can be requested in advance and returned at the end of the tour.

There are no longer public toilet facilities on the Royal Mile or surrounding area. Toilet facilities are available in local cafés, bars or restaurants or at the train station.

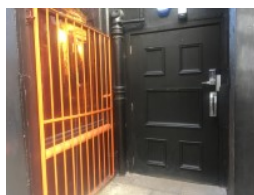
Summary (Blair Street Underground Vaults)

- [For information about the opening hours please click here](https://www.mercattours.com) (<https://www.mercattours.com>).
- Amenities at this site include: a reception and exhibition rooms.
- There is not onsite parking available here and there is standard on street parking nearby.
- The most accessible entrance has steps.
- There are no step-free entrances.

- The entrance surveyed is the Main Entrance.
- The building has 3 floors once inside.
- There is not step-free access once inside.
- There is stepped only access to the building, office, cellar and vaults.
- There is a member of staff available for help and assistance.
- This venue also has the following available: a clearly signed hearing assistance system.
- The following mobility aids are available to borrow: mobility walker. For more information on any hire fees or booking requirements, please contact the venue.
- Toilet and changing facilities available include: a standard toilet.
- There is/are 0 toilet(s) designated as accessible.
- The standard toilet surveyed can be found on the ground floor.
- There is a separate exit.
- The exit has a step and manual doors.
- Walking Tours normally start at the Mercat Cross on the Royal Mile. This is located opposite the City Chambers, to the rear of St Giles' Cathedral. The Blair Street building is the normal final destination for most tours.

Entrance (Blair Street Underground Vaults - Main Entrance)

Photos



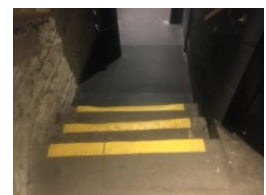
1



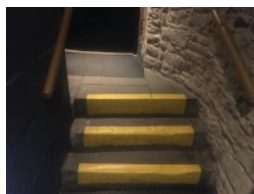
2



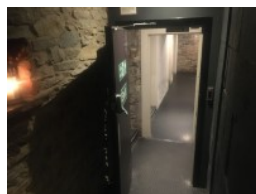
3



4



5



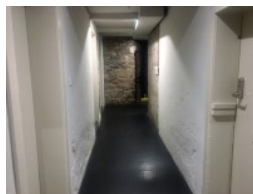
6

-
- The entrance surveyed is located at the front of the building.

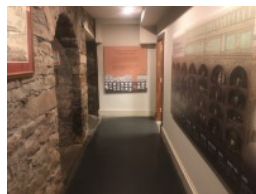
- There is not step-free access at this entrance.
- There are 3 steps.
- The steps are clearly marked with handrails on both sides.
- This entrance has a bell.
- Positioned at a recommended height: the bell (below 120cm).
- There is a single manual door which open towards you.
- The width of the opening is 107cm.
- There is a second set of doors.
- There is a single manual door which open towards you.
- The width of the opening is 79cm.

Getting Around (Blair Street Underground Vaults)

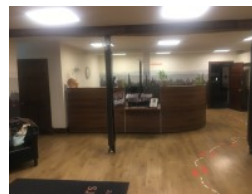
Photos



1



2



3



4

-
- There is not step-free access throughout the majority of the venue.
 - Some of the corridors are narrow (under 120cm wide).
 - There are chairs with armrests throughout the building.
 - All flooring in the area is smooth and even.
 - Some of the flooring in the venue has a very shiny finish, which could cause issues with glare or look slippery.
 - Lighting levels are low in some areas.
 - There is no (or very little) background noise here.

Attraction / Exhibit (The Discovery Room)

Photos



1



2



3

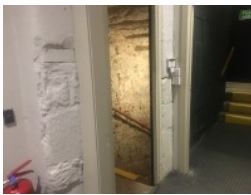


4

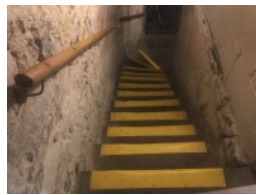
- There is step-free level access to and throughout this area.
- The majority of walkways are 150cm+ wide.
- There is no (or very little) background noise here.
- Exhibit information includes the following formats: tactile, pictorial, information board and interactive exhibits at a recommended height for wheelchair users (between 75cm - 120cm).
- The area does not have a hearing assistance system.
- There are no seats in this area.
- Flooring in the area is not smooth and even.
- Where the flooring is not smooth or even, it is due to uneven paving/tiles.
- Lighting levels are low in some areas.

Tour (Blair Street Cellar and Underground Vaults)

Photos



1



2



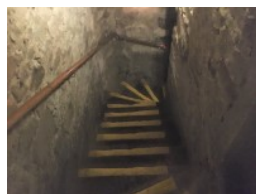
3



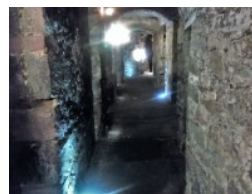
4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



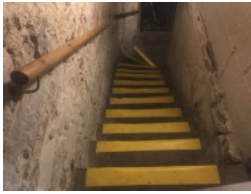
13

-
- The tour is guided.
 - The tour takes approximately 1 hour.
 - There is not step-free access along the tour route.
 - There are doorways or openings used on the tour which are under 75cm wide.
 - The majority of walkways are not 150cm+ wide.
 - Different tour types are available which may vary the tour time and route.
 - There is no (or very little) background noise along the tour route.
 - Tour information includes the following formats: audio description and interactive exhibits at a recommended height for wheelchair users (between 75cm - 120cm).
 - There are bench seats, stools and a mixture of chairs with and without armrests at regular intervals along the tour.
 - Where the flooring is not smooth or even, it is due to unsurfaced paths.
 - Lighting levels are low throughout the tour route.
 - The Cellar and Underground Vaults are visited as part of the Ghost Tours, Historic Underground and the Whisky Tour. There is seating located on the upper basement floor.

The Underground Vaults on the lower basement floor are not recommended for people with visual or mobility impairments, due to the uneven floor and very low lighting levels or others with a fear of darkness or enclosed spaces.

Stairs (The Cellar and Underground Vaults)

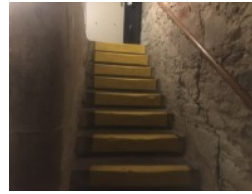
Photos



1



2



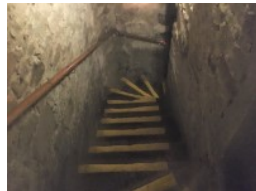
3



4



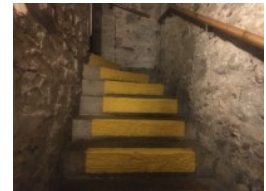
5



6



7



8

-
- The floors which are accessible by stairs are Ground (G), Mercat Cellar (B), Vaults (LB).
 - There are 15+ steps between floors.
 - The steps are clearly marked with a handrail on the right going up.
 - Lighting levels are low at these stairs.

Reception (Blair Street Office)

Photos



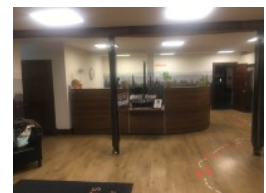
1



2



3



4



5



6

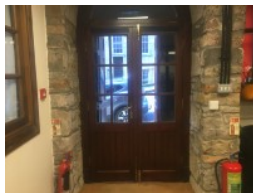
-
- There is step-free level access to this reception.

- The height of the reception counter is 130cm.
- There is a low level desk or counter at the recommended height for wheelchair users (between 76cm - 86cm).
- There is no (or very little) background noise here.
- There is a touch screen.
- The counter has a clearly signed hearing assistance system.
- There are armchairs and high stools available in the reception area.
- The reception is not used for booking tours. There is a touchscreen for booking tours next to the exit door in the exit porch.

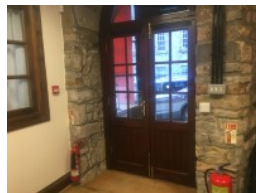
Exit



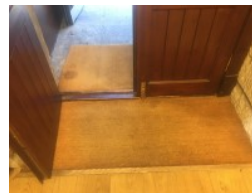
Photos



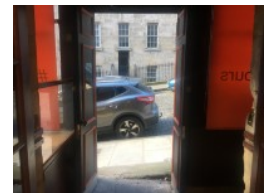
1



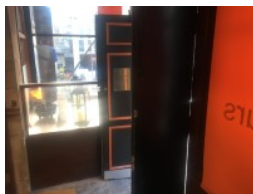
2



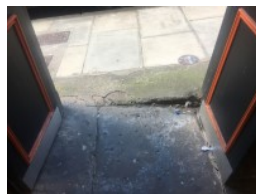
3



4



5



6



7

-
- The exit is located at the rear of the reception.
 - There is not step-free access at this exit.
 - There is one step.
 - The steps are not clearly marked and there are no handrails.
 - There are double manual doors which open towards you.
 - The width of the opening is 112cm.
 - There is a second set of doors.
 - There are double manual doors which are permanently held open.
 - The width of the opening is 106cm.

- This exit may also be used as an entrance to the reception as there is only a single shallow step.

Steps (Standard Toilet)

Photos



1



2

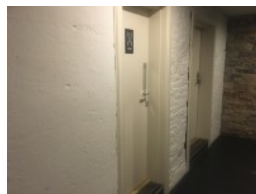
-
- There is one step.
 - The step is not clearly marked with no handrails.

Standard Toilet(s) (Ground Floor)

Photos



1



2



3



4

-
- There is not step-free access into the toilet(s).
 - There is a manual door which opens inwards and has a poor colour contrast.
 - The shared standard toilet was surveyed.
 - The wash basin tap type is lever.
 - The shared toilet facility is located on the left as you enter by the Blair Street Underground Vaults main entrance.