



The Athens of the North

Discover how international ideas built Edinburgh's New Town

Founded below a dormant volcano and home to the world's biggest arts festival, Edinburgh is a fascinating international city full of charm and culture. By the 17th century Edinburgh's thinkers and inventors led the world – but their town was too small and had twice been destroyed by fire.

So equally inspired by modern ideas and ancient empires, Edinburgh's great minds built a new town from scratch.



The National Monument, Calton Hill
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain

Edinburgh's New Town was a global landmark in urban design and became an international canvas to show off the Scottish Enlightenment. This walk allows you to explore the streets and buildings that put Edinburgh on the map and to discover some of the people whose ideas and ambitions created the 'Athens of the North'.

Location: Edinburgh, Scotland

Start Point: Edinburgh Waverley railway station

Postcode: EH1 1BB

Finish Point: Calton Hill

Distance: 2 miles

Level: Gentle – Flat city centre walk with a steep climb at the end

Suitable for:

Families – Take care when crossing busy roads in the city centre

Refreshments: No shortage of places to stop for food and drink along the walk route

Facilities: Free public toilets in Princes Street Gardens and St James

Walk the World is part of Discovering Places, the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad campaign to inspire the UK to discover their local environment. Walk the World is delivered in partnership by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) with Discovering Places and is principally funded by the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor.