



Visit **Aberdeenshire**



**#BeautifulABDN**

# //YOUR VISIT

Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again; that's our official toast and one you won't forget after your own visit.

From its vibrant nightlife and historic architecture to its whisky and castle trails, you're truly spoilt for choice in the area. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are packed full of lovely places to stay, fantastic restaurants with a range of delicious menus from around the world and fun-filled activities to keep your itinerary thoroughly entertaining. You'll be safe in the knowledge that **Aberdeen's Visitor Information Centre** located on **Union Street**, is staffed by local experts who are more than willing to help you explore what the area has to offer. Alternatively you can bookmark [www.visitabdn.com](http://www.visitabdn.com) on your phone or **download the VisitAbdn mobile app**.

So what are you waiting for?

Enjoy your visit!

**Steve Harris**

*Chief Executive*



# contents :

Old Town	04	Sports Village	34
Cathedrals	06	AFC	36
Ancestral	08	Satrosphere	38
Universities	10	Transition Extreme	40
Walks + Beach Walks	12	Shopping	42
Parks	14	The Merchant Quarter	44
HMT and Music Hall	16	Whisky	46
Live Events	18	Castles	48
Art Gallery	20	Royal Deeside	50
Maritime Museum	22	Wildlife	52
Gordon Highlanders	24	Banffshire Coast	54
Harbour	26	Stonehaven	56
Urban Dolphins + Harbour Cruises	28	Skiing	58
Fittie	30	Food	60
Golf	32	Drink	62
		Local Produce	64
		Map	66



# // OLD TOWN

The history of Aberdeen has always been a tale of two cities, whose modern role as Scotland's engine room fuelled by North Sea oil sits comfortably with its medieval past.

Universally known as the Granite City, after the sparkling rock used in the construction of its many fine buildings, Aberdeen, Scotland's third largest city, grew out of two distinct communities.

Monks and scholars, traders and travellers settled round Old Aberdeen in the area where 14th century **St Machars Cathedral** still stands and where **Kings College**, the forerunner to the **University of Aberdeen**, was founded by Bishop Elphinstone in 1495.

Nearby 'New Aberdeen' was home to fishermen, weavers and linen makers. But in 1319 the area grew rapidly after Robert the Bruce granted valuable land to the people for helping him storm the castle, which was held by English invaders.

In revenge the town was burned to the ground by the English in 1336 but it was rebuilt, gradually absorbing the old settlement at the mouth of the **River Don**, although Old and New Aberdeen did not officially merge into the beginnings of the city we know today until 1891.



In the centuries that followed, Aberdeen grew in prosperity with the growth of the fishing, whaling, shipbuilding and engineering industries.

Today, boosted by the benefits of North Sea oil and gas, with the ambition to become the Energy Capital of Europe by developing new sustainable energy sources, Aberdeen continues to be a city inspired by its past and confident of its future.

# robert the bruce :

Robert The Bruce was Aberdeen's greatest benefactor gifting Royal lands to the people in 1319 after they helped him repel English invaders.

The income from the land formed the basis of Aberdeen's Common Good Fund . A magnificent bronze statue of Bruce, paid for with money from the fund, can be seen outside Marischal College.

To this day Aberdeen's motto is Bon Accord which was the password on the day of the uprising.

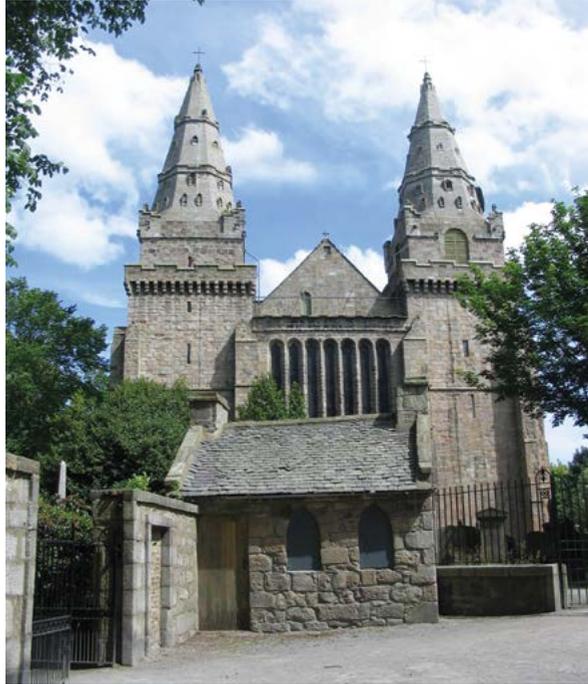


# //CATHEDRALS

The way some locals tell it, Aberdeen is one of the very few places in the UK to have three cathedrals...in order to increase the odds of staying on the right side of the Almighty?

Many would say that Aberdeen has done well out of the arrangement but the truth is that Aberdeen has long had a history of religious tolerance exemplified by the magnificent, yet diverse, cathedrals of **St Machar's Cathedral**, the oldest of the three and used by Church of Scotland worshippers; the **Episcopal Cathedral Church of St Andrew** which dates back to 1716; and **St Mary's RC Cathedral**, which was built in 1860.

**St Machar** in Old Aberdeen, the only medieval granite cathedral in the world, has been a place of worship since 580 AD. A charming story tells that St Machar, a contemporary of St Columba, had a dream to build an early church on this particular site because it was on the bend of the river Don which was shaped like the handle of a Bishop's crook. American visitors will be particularly interested in **St Andrews** as the location of the consecration of the first bishop in America and thus the home of the worldwide Anglican communion.



All three cathedrals are open daily and welcome visitors.

#### **Find out more on these websites:**

[www.stmachar.com](http://www.stmachar.com)

[www.stmaryscathedralaberdeen.org](http://www.stmaryscathedralaberdeen.org)

[www.cathedral.aberdeen.anglican.org/  
St\\_Andrews/Welcome](http://www.cathedral.aberdeen.anglican.org/St_Andrews/Welcome).

# sir william wallace :



The great Scottish patriot Sir William Wallace is a permanent resident of Aberdeen - or at least part of him is according to a local legend. When Wallace was hung, drawn and quartered in London in 1305, parts of his body were sent to key cities in the UK to warn locals of the dangers of rebellion. One of his arms is said to be interred in a wall in St Machar's Cathedral with the carving of a star marking the spot.

# //ANCESTRAL

Inspired by television programmes like *Who Do You Think You Are?* coupled with a boom in ancestral tourism, Aberdeen has become extremely well placed to help visitors answer the age old question: **Where do I come from?**

No matter how vague your link with the North-East might be, we can help make your visit even more enjoyable by helping you delve into your past with two easy to use websites.

Check out [www.northeastscotlandroots.com](http://www.northeastscotlandroots.com) which contains great advice on how to get started, what information you need and where to find it, plus a list of places to find original records. The website also contains a number of fascinating real life family stories from the area to inspire you to look into your own past.

The website of **Aberdeen & North-East Scotland Family History Society** - [www.anesfhs.org.uk](http://www.anesfhs.org.uk) - is another brilliant resource to help you find more about your history and covers not just Aberdeen itself but the old counties of Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Kincardineshire and Morayshire. You never know what you might discover, so what's keeping you? Happy ancestor hunting.



Visit **Aberdeenshire** sponsor the production of 'Routes to your North-East Roots', a brochure that helps guide you on your quest for your ancestors. It brings together information on the organisations which hold original records, or secondary sources of information, that you will find extremely useful when building your family tree. Find it here: [www.visitabdn.com/ancestral-tourism](http://www.visitabdn.com/ancestral-tourism)

# 50 million people :

Around 50 million people worldwide claim Scottish ancestry and because Scottish written records go back a long way it is relatively simple to trace your roots. In Aberdeen it can be very straight forward because church authorities carefully recorded births, deaths and marriages for hundreds of years and these are still available today. Just don't blame us if you unearth a family scandal!



# // UNIVERSITIES

The magnificent £57 million library of the **University of Aberdeen**, opened by Her Majesty the Queen in September 2011, and the ever expanding **Robert Gordon University** Garthdee Campus on the banks of the **River Dee**, are two potent symbols which serve to underline the huge investment Aberdeen continues to make in the field of higher education.

With such world class facilities available it is hardly surprising that Scotland's third largest city, with a population of 230,000, is home to 50,000 students.

Students attending **RGU** ([www.rgu.ac.uk](http://www.rgu.ac.uk)), which has strong links to the North Sea Oil and Gas industry, have the opportunity to study subjects from architecture to engineering, social work to law and computing to fine art.

**The University of Aberdeen**, which is associated with five Nobel Prize winners, can offer students a choice of over 600 first degree programmes and 140 master's courses.

Founded in 1495 by William Elphinstone,



Bishop of Aberdeen and Chancellor of Scotland, it is Scotland's third oldest and the UK's fifth oldest university.

As you would expect, this annual influx of students from home and abroad gives the city a vibrant cosmopolitan feel with a great social life guaranteed.

# established and thriving :

Not that we want to boast ... but until 1858 Aberdeen had two long established and thriving universities - precisely the same number which served to educate all of England. Aberdeen became a two university town once again in 1992 when university status was granted to the Robert Gordon Institute of Technology.



# //WALKS + BEACH WALKS

Aberdeen is one of the few cities to boast not only a rich and fascinating history but a proper sandy beach; although the weather is often more suited to a bracing walk than sunbathing.

One of the most popular routes when exploring the city takes you through the hidden gem that is **Old Aberdeen**. Along the city's beach circuit you will find an unexpected mixture of fabulous sea front, picturesque riverside and woodland, combined with an exploration of the cobbled streets and ancient buildings, university and cathedral of **Old Aberdeen**. You can even get the children involved with the Old Aberdeen Treasure Trail; a great and quirky way for youngsters to learn about the history of the area.

Aberdeen beach is famous for its golden sand and its long curved length between the harbour and the **River Don's** mouth. It is a real city treat and a hive of activity all year round. Visitors can stroll along the esplanade, have an ice cream or enjoy a pint whilst enjoying the wonderful setting - it's also the hub for some fantastic water



and land sports. Surfers can be seen every day, whilst wind surfers, kayakers and kite buggy riders, joggers, skateboarders, bikers and folk on rollerblades all make use of the wide open spaces.

The beach is also host to Scotland's largest permanent funfair, **Codonas**, a variety of restaurants and a cinema.

# deckchairs on the sands :

‘A walk on the Prom is popular with Aberdeen folk and for some people it is a trip down memory lane, back to the long-lost days when they listened to the “oompah” bands on the Links, laughed at Harry Gordon in the Pavilion and sat on deckchairs on the sands.’

Extract from 25 walks in and around Aberdeen,  
Robert Smith



# //PARKS

Aberdeen is blessed with lots of green space and beautiful parks. **Duthie Park**, which covers 44 acres and opened to the public in 1883, is arguably the city's finest. Having been recently restored and refurbished it is a wonderful escape; an outstanding example of a late Victorian park.

Within the park are the **Winter Gardens**, which house many exotic plants including the largest collection of cacti in Britain. This is a park for all the family, with activities from boating in the ponds to cricket on the lawns.

**Hazlehead Park** is 10 times the size at over 444 acres and was originally part of the freedom lands granted to the city in 1319 by Robert the Bruce. On the city outskirts it is heavily wooded and popular with sports enthusiasts, walkers and picnickers.

In the north is **Seaton Park**, adjacent to the fortified towers of **St Machar's Cathedral**. The Cathedral Walk is always a resplendent sight in midsummer and one of the most popular with visitors to the city. You can also gain access to the **River Don** and walk from the park to the city boundary.



Right in the heart of the city, **Union Terrace Gardens** provides an oasis of calm and is surrounded by much of the city's finest architecture. It is a sunken Victorian garden that opened in 1879 and well worth a visit.

# medieval burgh :

If you are in the old town ... The Cruickshank Botanic Garden is a must. It sits in the medieval burgh of Old Aberdeen, between St Machar's Cathedral and King's College.

It was founded in 1898 with a bequest from Miss Anne Cruickshank, given in memory of her brother. The original Deed of Trust specified that the Garden was to be 'for the furtherance of University interests and the public good'. The Garden is a wonderful amenity for staff, students and the general public.



# //HMT AND MUSIC HALL

**His Majesty's Theatre** on Rosemount Viaduct completes an elaborate granite triumvirate of **The Central Library** and **St Mark's** neo classical church; three buildings affectionately known by Aberdonians as Education, Salvation and Damnation!

Today's audiences can marvel at the fine Edwardian interior originally designed by Frank Matcham, whose architectural portfolio included The Hackney Empire, London Palladium and Victoria Palace as well as Blackpool's Tower Ballroom.

The curtain rose for the first time in December 1906 with the pantomime Little Red Riding Hood and even today the pantomime remains a firm favourite, with Elaine C Smith becoming a key annual fixture.

Historical big name stars who brought their magic to the stage of the theatre included Erroll Flynn Alex Guinness, Noel Coward, Charlton Heston and Vivien Leigh. Recent sell out blockbuster productions at the theatre have included: We Will Rock You, Grease, Legally Blonde and Hairspray.



Union Street's **Music Hall**, as well as being a noteworthy, civic, pillared Assembly Hall offers a platform – thanks to its renowned acoustics – for choral and concert music, as well as for contemporary comedians such as Jimmy Carr, Frankie Boyle and Ed Byrne.

# beautiful theatre :

“We had a few days’ vacation prior to opening at His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen. A most beautiful theatre and wonderful staff in a beautiful city. Mrs Court and I enjoyed our stroll round this city of granite of the north. Outside the portico of the theatre is a huge statue of Wallace - that great Scottish patriot.”

Percy Court - Theatre and Tour Manager 1940s.



# //LIVE EVENTS

For a lively night out enjoying some of the country's best loved established acts as well as new talent, head for the city's hidden gem, **The Lemon Tree**.

Named after the pub that once stood on the site in West North Street, the **Lemon Tree** has, since it opened in 1992, built up a fantastic reputation as one of Scotland's most innovative venues for alternative entertainment from jazz to comedy, dance to experimental theatre, children's shows to rock opera. No wonder locals are proud to refer to it as an all-year-round festival.

Performers at the 500 seat venue - which also has smaller studio space for more intimate gigs - have included singer Laura Marling, Scots indie rock band Idlewild, and comedians John Bishop, Sarah Millican and Craig Campbell.

**The AECC Arena** can put on a show like nowhere else in the North of Scotland, holding audiences of up to 8,500 and giving big-name artists an intimate arena in which to perform.

A-list stars including Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey, Bryan Adams, Oasis, Iron Maiden, Arctic Monkeys and Take That



have enthralled audiences of thousands here, since the first act, WetWetWet, took to the stage in 1990.

Big name comedians regularly perform at AECC, including the likes of Eddie Izzard and Mickey Flanagan, Jack Whitehall, Russell Howard and Lee Evans on the bill.

Family shows including Disney on Ice and Disney Live! regularly perform at the venue, as well as sporting events such as McCoy's Premier League Darts.

# lively night :

Back in the 1930s what is now the Lemon Tree was one of the most popular and, to be honest, very few places where young people could meet with complete parental approval. That's probably because the venue, then known as St Katherine's Hall and run by the Young Women's Christian Association, was strictly teetotal!



# //ART GALLERY\*

Centrally located and a firm favourite with locals and visitors alike, **Aberdeen Art Gallery** is a must-see destination just a short stroll from the bustle of **Union Street**.

Most visitors remark on the gallery's overall sense of tranquillity with natural light from cupola windows flooding the rooms and, while the design reflects its Victorian roots, this is no dry as dust municipal gallery stuck in the past.

There's a Barbara Hepworth sculpture with water spilling through it and a Tracey Emin pink neon heart reflected in the marble pool below – to name but two exhibits.

There's also an impressive range of more traditional works including 18th century portraits by Raeburn, Hogarth and Ramsey alongside paintings by Monet, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec and Degas.

The gallery, an easy mix of the traditional and the avant garde, also boasts a significant collection of ceramics, costume, furniture, glass, jewellery, metalwork and textiles many of which are produced by local artists.

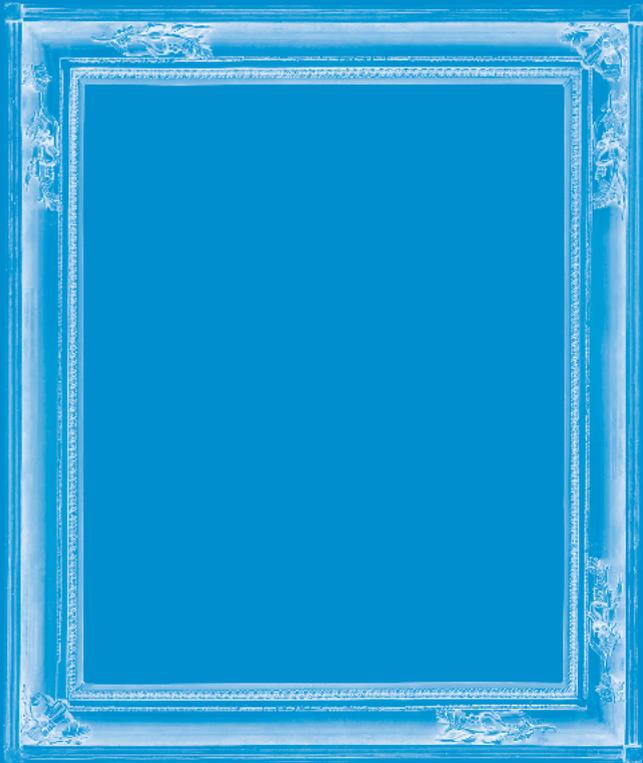


Last year the gallery attracted more than 200,000 visitors - this year make sure you're one of them. Did we mention it's free?

The Gallery closed in 2015 for a major redevelopment but much of its collection is displayed at Drum Castle during the closure. Keep up-to-date with the project via [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk)

# 1880s

- Back in the 1880s John Forbes White, grain merchant, art lover and pioneering Victorian photographer used a clinching argument to persuade Aberdeen's city fathers to build an art gallery - rival city Dundee had beaten them to it! And five years later, with the backing of fellow benefactors, the gallery we see today was first opened to the public.



# //MARITIME MUSEUM

Ever fancied getting up close and personal to a North Sea oil rig with all that tiresome business of having to endure a helicopter trip while wearing a survival suit?

Thought not. Instead why not visit Aberdeen's five star rated **Maritime Museum**, with its impressive view over the bustling harbour, and marvel at a 1:33 scale model of the real thing. It will take your breath away.

Many believe it to be the most impressive exhibit in the museum; giving a real sense of both the engineering expertise involved and the constant struggle to extract oil from the North Sea.

The model of the Murchison Oil Platform is around 25ft high and extends all the way through the heart of the museum while its name sake's four corner legs are fixed to the sea bed, 150 miles North-East of Shetland, by 32 piles each weighing over 250 tons and designed to withstand 100ft waves and 150mph winds.

While a great deal of emphasis in the museum is put on all aspects of the North Sea oil and gas industries, Aberdeen's much older maritime links are not forgotten and include fascinating



insights into the history of more than 3000 ships built in Aberdeen, between 1811 and 1992.

More details of this unique and unmissable museum can be found at [www.aagm.co.uk](http://www.aagm.co.uk).

# hms scylla :

The long standing myth that Aberdonians are penny pinching misers took a knock in 1942 when local people raised over £2m to pay for the construction of a Dido class cruiser named HMS Scylla as part of the war effort. The ship, built by Scotts of Greenock, would have cost the equivalent of £57m today. The warship was granted the Freedom of the City in 1992 and is now Europe's first artificial reef.



# //GORDON HIGHLANDERS

It started with a kiss. It ended, almost exactly 200 years later, following a glorious history in which the famous and feared **Gordon Highlanders** saw action all over the world. Nineteen of its soldiers had been awarded the Victoria Cross by the time the regiment was disbanded.

The legacy of the Gordon Highlanders lives on through the current serving soldiers of The Highlanders, 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

And that kiss? When the regiment was founded by the 4th Duke of Gordon in 1794 his glamorous wife Jean offered a kiss to every man who joined up and, it is said, that within a month the regiment had more than 1000 new recruits.

Today, dedicated volunteers, many of whom are ex members of the Gordons, keep alive the proud history of the world famous regiment in the **Gordon Highlanders Museum** in Viewfield Road Aberdeen.

A brief film of their involvement in the First World War is particularly poignant, while the stories behind the regiment's VCs are inspirational.

There's a well-stocked gift shop, a coffee



shop and the venue is available for conferences and other corporate events.

For anyone who values the sacrifices made by our fighting forces in the past a visit to this intimate museum is a must.

Find out more by visiting [www.gordonhighlanders.com](http://www.gordonhighlanders.com)

# heights of dargai :

Piper George Findlater, from Turriff, is one of the most famous Victoria Cross holders in the British Army. He took part in the scaling of the Heights of Dargai by the Gordon Highlanders on 20th October 1897. Despite being shot in both feet he propped himself up on a rock and continued playing his bagpipes to encourage his comrades. For this act of great courage the 25 year old junior piper was awarded one of his regiments 19 VCs.



# //HARBOUR

If North Sea oil is the Granite City's life blood, then **Aberdeen Harbour**, one of the longest established ports in the UK, is its beating heart. This success didn't happen overnight, with evidence that Romans were the first traders to use the port.

Today the port services the oil and gas industry around the world as well as the thriving domestic offshore industry.

Generating more than £500 million annually for the North-East economy last year, the port handled around 5 million tonnes of cargo worth £1.5 billion.

This success has led to the Trust Port bringing forward ambitious expansion plans that will see Nigg Bay transformed into a modern, state of the art extension of the current harbour. This will allow Aberdeen to see many more visits from cruise ships.

Behind these figures lie countless inspiring stories of the men and women who contribute to its success which made the ideal subject for the documentary makers behind the acclaimed BBC TV series *The Harbour*.

If the series has given you a taste to get close to the action, book an Aberdeen



Harbour Cruise with Clyde Cruises ([www.clydecruises.com/aberdeen-harbour-cruises/](http://www.clydecruises.com/aberdeen-harbour-cruises/)). You can read more on page 28 of this brochure.

# cruise ship destination :

Aberdeen Harbour is one of 15 Scottish ports which make up the award winning Cruise Scotland initiative, which promotes the country as an attractive cruise ship destination.

Last year, the ten cruise vessels which berthed at Aberdeen brought almost 2,000 visitors to Aberdeen and its surrounding area, linking the region to the Northern Isles, the Outer Hebrides and Norway.



# // URBAN DOLPHINS + HARBOUR CRUISES

**Aberdeen Harbour** (see page 26) is one of the UK's busiest and oldest ports but now you can sit back and experience a different view of Aberdeen on-board an exciting and informative cruise.

A fully narrated tour will allow you to view Aberdeen's skyline from a different perspective and experience close up views of the numerous oil industry support vessels berthed in the harbour and docks.

However, that's not all. The harbour entrance is home to what have become known as our "urban dolphins"! This year, special cruises will set off in search of bottlenose dolphins, white beaked dolphins, minke whale, risso dolphins, basking sharks, porpoises, puffins and a myriad of other marine wildlife.

If you prefer your fish fried, there is a special after work Fish & Ships harbour cruise complete with hot, fresh fish and chips delivered to the boat. What better way to round off a busy working day?

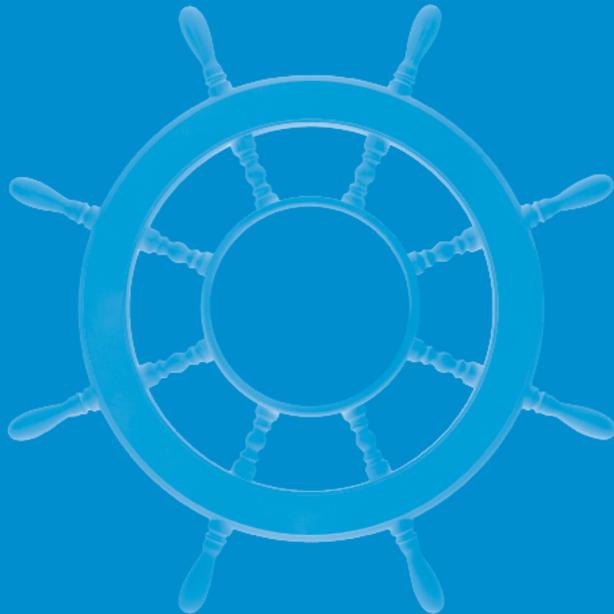
[www.clydecruises.com](http://www.clydecruises.com)



# dolphinwatch :

Dolphinwatch is a fantastic project on the Aberdeen coast which is run by RSPB Scotland in partnership with VisitAberdeenshire, Aberdeen City Council and Whale Dolphin Conservation. The exciting venture highlights dolphins as well as provides interpretation on a vast array of coastal birds and wildlife. Bottlenose dolphins are frequently seen feeding at the entrance to Aberdeen Harbour and staff and volunteers are on hand with binoculars and telescopes to offer great views of the largest bottlenose dolphins in the world!

The project is seasonal and RSPB can provide you with details. Did you realise that Aberdeen was a wildlife tourist destination?



# //FITTIE

Escape the city centre bustle and head for **Footdee** to explore the timeless cobbled streets of the quaint and peaceful conservation fishing village. **Footdee** - or **Fittie** as it is known by locals - is one of the most unique communities in the UK huddled at the end of a rewarding stroll along the beach front.

The charming mid 19th century former fishing community was designed by John Smith, the architect responsible for **Balmoral Castle**, and to visit it today really is like stepping back in time.

The cottages all face inwards in squares with their backs to the ocean to protect them and their inhabitants from the fierce storms which, then as now, rage in from the sea.

According to Trip Advisor, visitors rank **Fittie** as the fifth most popular attraction in Aberdeen out of 92 saying such things as:

“The houses are very short - what a hobbit-hole would be like if made from bricks! I've seen dolphins from the beachside path here before. I'd bring



binoculars if you have them and look towards the harbour.”

“Glad we visited this unique village that seems stuck in its own time warp. Some of the village garden sheds reminded me of the workshop in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang!”

# white foam :

The fishing village of Fittie made global headlines in September 2012 when the entire village was completely covered in white foam as Aberdeen was battered by severe storms.

Scientists said that natural organic material present in the sea was whipped up into snow like foam by unusually high winds.



# //GOLF

The biggest challenge for golfers visiting Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is not which courses to choose but which ones to leave out.

Best estimates are that there are at least 50 courses within an hour and a half of Aberdeen; which one will you choose in an area which boasts such a rich golfing heritage and a diversity of golf courses for novice and professional alike?

Frankly it's not the worst dilemma to have.

So will you head for **Hazlehead No 1**, a terrific parkland course said by its many fans to be the best in the North-East of Scotland? That's hardly surprising since it was designed by Dr Alistair Mackenzie who created the Augusta National course, home of the US Masters.

Or would you prefer to test your skills on the links course at the prestigious **Royal Aberdeen Golf Club**?

Or how about the 2,000 acres **Trump International Golf Links** on the stunning Aberdeenshire coast at Balmedie? Opened in July 2012 it is already causing a sensation in the international golfing world.

**Fraserburgh Golf Course** is older by three hundred years or so and it too is a challenging links course set amid



giant sand dunes, while **Braemar** is the highest 18-hole course in Britain where the greens are around 1,200 ft above sea level and sit among truly breath-taking views over Royal Deeside.

Still undecided? We can't say we blame you!

For more information about golf in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, go to [www.golfaberdeen.com](http://www.golfaberdeen.com).

# sixth oldest golf club :

Golfers from all over the world visited Aberdeen in July 2014 where Royal Aberdeen hosted Aberdeen Asset Management's Scottish Open for the first time. Founded in 1780, the Bridge of Don based course is the world's sixth oldest golf club.



# //SPORTS VILLAGE

Two million people can't be wrong.

That's the impressive number of sporty types, young and old, beginner or life time enthusiast, who have benefited from the impressive facilities at **Aberdeen Sports Village**, the North-East's premier sporting facility, since it opened in 2009.

The light and airy sports hall is in constant demand for basketball, netball, badminton, archery, indoor hockey and boxing.

There's also an indoor athletics area, the highly popular energy fitness zone, a 400 metre running track and a full sized indoor football pitch.

Aberdeen will now be able to host national and international swimming competitions with the opening of the new multi-million pound state of the art **Aquatics Centre**.

The 10 lane 50m pool, which is connected by a bridge to **Aberdeen Sports Village**, is also playing a role in the 2014 Commonwealth Games. This world class new facility means that the area's future elite swimmers will no longer have to travel far to train.

[www.aberdeensportsvillage.com](http://www.aberdeensportsvillage.com)



# swimming :

Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are breeding grounds for Olympic and Commonwealth swimmers - most recently Hannah Miley, Robbie Renwick and David Carry.



The roars of delight from the 15,000 Aberdeen fans, on that famous night of 11 May 1983 at the Ullevi Stadion in Gothenburg, could have cracked the granite on every building back home as the Dandy Dons entered the history books by humbling the mighty Real Madrid 2-1 to bring the European Cup Winners' Cup to Scotland.

Former Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson was the Aberdeen manager and among the star players was long-time club hero Gordon Strachan who was back at **Pittodrie** in February 2013, in his first game in charge as Scotland manager, leading the national side to a 1-0 win over Estonia in a friendly.

In the 1980s the Dons won three league titles, four Scottish Cups and a Scottish League Cup, alongside the Cup Winners' Cup and the UEFA Super Cup, both in 1983.

The 2013-14 season saw a return to form as The Dons finished 3rd in the table, earning a place in the Europa League. The future looks bright at Pittodrie, which isn't bad considering that the



stadium is named in Gaelic and the translation means “pit of dung” or “place of manure”! Police horses were stabled there before the first Aberdeen club arrived in 1899.

The 110-year-old SPL side, which is currently planning a major move to a new stadium, inspire incredible loyalty among fans and are still capable of crushing more fancied rivals.

Behind the scenes tours of **Pittodrie Stadium** run on one day each week. Check [www.afc.co.uk](http://www.afc.co.uk) for details.

# denis law :

The greatest football player the Granite City has ever produced is honoured with a life-sized bronze statue in his home city, yet legendary Scotland and Manchester United star Denis Law never once played for Aberdeen FC.

Law spent all his playing career in England and Italy, including 11 years at Manchester United, where he became the first Scot to be named European Footballer of the Year and was part of the Red Devils side that became the first English club to win the European Cup by beating Benfica in 1968.

A statue, outside Aberdeen Sports Village, shows him scoring for Scotland during their famous 3-2 victory over world champions England at Wembley in 1967.



# //Aberdeen Science Centre

Treat your budding scientists to a great day out at one of Aberdeen's best loved attractions for children and, we suspect, for mums and dads as well.

**Aberdeen Science Centre**, Scotland's first science and discovery centre, opened in 1988 and has been growing in popularity ever since.

That's partly due to the influx of TV friendly scientists like Dr Brian Cox but it helps that **Aberdeen Science Centre** is not the kind of place where the scientists of tomorrow are confronted by 'don't touch' signs.

Instead, young visitors are actively encouraged by friendly and knowledgeable staff to interact with the exhibits to discover more about our world and the science of how things work.

Live science shows are also a feature of a visit to **Aberdeen Science Centre** which is located close to the city's Beach Boulevard. Parking is free and, for non-drivers, it's well served by public transport.

Not surprisingly the gift shop has a fantastic range of all things scientific, including models, posters, gifts and books at prices to suit all pockets.



If you need an energy boost, **Tramsheds Coffee House** serves light bites between 10am and 4pm daily. Learning was never this much fun.

[www.aberdeensciencecentre.org](http://www.aberdeensciencecentre.org)

# sir david gill :

Long before Aberdeen was 'The Oil Capital of Europe', the city enjoyed a global reputation for scientific advancement. As far back as 1882, Aberdeen astronomer Sir David Gill became the first scientist in the world to take a photograph of a comet. His name lives on in space exploration today because the Moon's Gill Crater is named after him.



# //TRANSITION EXTREME

It's the urban sports centre where the drug of choice is adrenaline and where you can challenge the ultimate opponent - yourself.

The stated aims of **Transition Extreme** are to be a 'truly modern social enterprise using urban sports and their cultures to attract and engage the local youth population'.

In other words, it's a unique purpose built sports facility where young people are encouraged to take new challenges including indoor rock climbing on a 50ft high artificial rock face, practising the latest inline skating and skateboarding techniques or perfecting BMX skills in a friendly atmosphere; where the only adults in sight are the experienced staff whose role is to advise not criticise.

Some 50,000 people come here each year but by no means are all visitors teenagers wearing skinny jeans and over-sized baseball caps. A significant amount of its business comes from local companies who send their staff for specially tailored team building and corporate events!

[www.transition-extreme.com](http://www.transition-extreme.com)



# legal graffiti :

As you walk into Transition Extreme you will notice the purpose built Graffiti Wall.

Funded by Aberdeen City Council, the wall was installed in March 2009 with support from Whitespace and local artists. Since then the wall has served as a legal space for aerosol graffiti art with many local artists regularly “getting up” at Transition. Running alongside the building itself, the wall is in a perfect, sheltered spot to practice techniques and get creative without worrying about the law.



# //SHOPPING

With quirky little back street boutiques stocking one-off designer jewellery, craft shops with a huge range of high quality hand-made Scottish gifts, and inspirational shopping centres selling exclusive international fashion brands, it's little wonder that Aberdeen is regarded by locals and visitors alike as an exciting all year round shopping destination.

A stroll down the famous 'Granite Mile' - **Union Street** - gives the visitor easy access to no fewer than 800 shops including familiar names like Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, Topshop, Waterstones, Cruise and Hugo Boss.

In nearby trendy **Chapel Street, Rose Street** or **Little Belmont Street** look out for independent locally owned shops specialising in items you simply won't find anywhere else.

The city has five lively shopping centres- **Union Square, Trinity, Bon Accord St Nicholas, The Galleria** and **The Academy**.



**Union Square**, the city's newest, opened three years ago and now has 60 shops including the Apple Store, believed to be the busiest branch outside London, the delightfully decadent Hotel Chocolat, which sells luxury chocolates made with cocoa beans from the company's own estate in St Lucia and the fashionable home store White Company as well as MAC Cosmetics.

# happiest place :

It's not just the terrific choice of shops (see left) that makes Aberdonians happy. A study by the Office for National Statistics, published in 2012, officially named Aberdeen as the happiest place to live in Scotland thanks to its rich local culture, beautiful surroundings, crime statistics which are well below the Scottish average, low unemployment and high salaries. This will come as no surprise to Aberdonians. After all the city's traditional toast is 'Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again - the toast of Bon Accord.'



# //THE MERCHANT QUARTER

Situated beneath and to the south of **Union Street** is the historic merchant quarter. At its centre **The Green** and its surroundings are amongst the oldest known parts of the city.

**The Green** is one of four administrative medieval quarters recorded by 1399 and was an important point of entry to the city. Religious and mercantile activity have underpinned the life and economics of the area over a 750 year period. **The Green** remains an important architectural and historic area reminding us of Aberdeen's story from its medieval urban origins through to its nineteenth century expansion.

Carmelite and Trinitarian religious orders established friaries to the south of the Green and near Guild Street by the 13th century, centred on impressive stone built buildings. The strategic position of the Green, close to the developing harbour and near one of the town "ports" which controlled trade, ensured that the area continued to be closely associated with trading.



Now **The Green** is surrounded by a fashionable hotel, **Carmelite**, an excellent seafood restaurant, **Bistro Verdi** and trendy **Café 52**, along with independent shops and bars.

The Quarter is also becoming a regular venue for live music, festivals and arts.

# flint working area :

Archaeological excavation in the Green revealed a flint working area where people prepared implements for fishing and hunting at least 8000 years ago. From the medieval period, archaeological and historical evidence combine to show a picture of progressive urban expansion shaped by religion, trade and Aberdeen's topography.



# //WHISKY

If you measure your pleasure by enjoying the very best of malt whisky, then welcome to a connoisseur's paradise.

A journey of a little more than 15 miles from the heart of the Granite City will take you to the farming village of Oldmeldrum, home to the **Glen Garioch** distillery. It's here that **Glen Garioch** (pronounced Geerie) single malt, described by experts as 'light, clean and with a peaty finish' is produced.

It's one of the nearest distilleries to the city. But why not let your search for other classic malts take you further afield to discover the delights of the big hitters like **Glenfiddich** and the **Glenlivet** on Speyside or the unique **Glenglassaugh** malt, lovingly crafted at the recently revived distillery in Banffshire fishing village of Portsoy?

From its home in the Scottish Highlands, **The GlenDronach Distillery** has been creating the finest richly sherried malts for nearly 200 years, making it one of Scotland's oldest working distilleries.

Neighbouring Balmoral Castle, **Royal Lochnagar** Distillery is the perfect place to discover how Scotch Whisky is made. A tour of Royal Lochnagar Distillery is a timeless experience; watch as their team of operators tend to their traditional mashtun, gleaming copper stills and fill casks at their traditional distillery, which retains much of its original charm.



Even if you don't get the chance to visit one of our many distilleries, you can take the "water of life" home with you. The only problem is you'll have a job choosing which one, as you can take your pick from over 1,000 bottles at the **Aberdeen Whisky Shop** on Union Street.

We've done the planning so you won't have to. You'll find all the information you need about locations, opening times and route planning at the website [www.maltwhiskytrail.com](http://www.maltwhiskytrail.com). Alternatively, plan your trip for early May and you'll be in spiritual heaven at the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival.

Slainte!

# single malt whisky :

“Even before I touched a drop, I loved the names: Glenfarclas, Benromach, Aberlour, Dallas Dhu and Craigellachie. Aficionados of single malt whisky will immediately recognise these distilleries from Speyside, sandwiched between Inverness to the west and Aberdeen to the east.”

Mark Tran, The Guardian on the annual Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival



# //CASTLES

If you like your castles fairy-tale or fearsome, ruined or restored, you're sure to find one to suit your taste in an area which truly lives up its title as Scotland's Castle Country.

With hundreds of properties to choose from why not let the experts at National Trust for Scotland or Historic Scotland be your guide to picking your favourite for an unforgettable day out with the family?

Many of the castles are on main public transport routes while others are easily accessible by car along some of the most scenic routes in Scotland.

Less than 20 miles from Aberdeen city centre, the attractive little town of Banchory is home to the imposing **Crathes Castle**, which dates back to the 16th century. No matter what time of year you pick for your visit, there's always something to see or do and with a 595 acre estate there are six different trails for you to enjoy.

Equally impressive, although for different reasons, is **Dunnottar Castle** by Stonehaven. A remarkable ruin built on a narrow spine of cliff extending into



the North Sea, it was the hiding place for Scotland's Crown jewels against Cromwell's troops.

Other castles waiting for you to explore, include **Fyvie Castle** by Turriff, 16th century **Castle Fraser** by Inverurie and elegant **Haddo House** by Ellon.

# pink coloured castle :

Once upon a time, it is said that a friend of Walt Disney returned from a visit to Craigievar Castle, near the Aberdeenshire village of Alford. The cartoon king was so impressed by the famously pink coloured castle with its fairy-tale turrets and romantic woodland setting that he based the Disney castles in his films on photographs his friend had taken while on holiday.



# //ROYAL DEESIDE

In one of the many entries in her journals on Royal Deeside, Queen Victoria surely spoke for future generations of visitors when she wrote: “Every year my heart becomes more fixed on this dear paradise.”

Successive monarchs have spent their annual summer holidays here so you'll be in good company exploring lush moorland, shady pine forests, crystal clear rivers and imposing mountains including Queen Victoria's favourite Munro, Lochnagar (3789ft) which she called the 'jewel of all mountains'. Her ancestors still keep her tradition of patronage of the Braemar Gathering, on the first Saturday of September.

Follow, literally, in Royal footsteps by travelling along the Victorian Heritage Trail ([www.visitroyaldeeside.com](http://www.visitroyaldeeside.com)) which will take you through charmingly individual little towns including Banchory, Aboyne, Ballater and Braemar as well as landmarks, beauty spots and attractions with a special connection to Queen Victoria who first made her beloved **Balmoral Castle** ([www.balmoralcastle.com](http://www.balmoralcastle.com)) her Scottish home in 1856.



# queen victoria :

Many visitors believe that John Brown, Queen Victoria's loyal servant and confidante from the film Mrs Brown, was a fictional character but you can visit his grave in the cemetery opposite Crathie Kirk, where the royals worship when staying at Balmoral Castle.



## //WILDLIFE

With easy access to hidden beaches, sandy coves, rugged cliff and miles of lush heather moors in the heart of the **Cairngorm National Park**, The City of Aberdeen stands on the edge of a nature lover's heaven.

Experience the exhilarating spectacle of sea birds, including guillemot, kittiwakes, razorbills and puffins at the **Fowlsheugh RSPB** reserve south of Stonehaven where as many as 13,000 birds breed on the sandstone cliffs.

Just 12 miles north of Aberdeen are the enchanting **Sands of Forvie**, often described as Scotland's desert where several rare plants flower including – believe it or not – orchids! It is also home to a number of species of butterfly and more eider ducks breed here than anywhere else in the UK.

Bird lovers should not miss the RSPB's **Loch of Strathbeg** reserve just south of Fraserburgh, one of the best places in Britain to see wintering pink footed geese. But seabird central has to be at **Troup Head** where the high cliffs provide a spectacular setting for Scotland's only mainland gannet colony.



Aberdeen is alive with wildlife. **The Ranger Service** ([www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/rangerservice](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/rangerservice)) runs a seasonal programme that gives a taste of the coastal, marine and city wildlife. They have a centre at **Loriston Loch** in the south of the city where otter spotting is on the menu! The River Don is another good place to spot the illusive creature... as well as the seals at Balgownie lying on the sandbanks.

Take a stroll on the wild side of Aberdeen life!

# red kite :

Aberdeen is at the centre of a long running project to increase the Red Kite population, one of the most threatened species in Scotland.

The magnificent birds were hunted to extinction in Scotland and England in the 19th century but now, thanks to the RSPB, just over 100 of them have been successfully reared and reintroduced to the wild in a project that began six years ago when the first chicks were hatched at a secret location south of Aberdeen.



# //BANFFSHIRE COAST

Bring your family to meet our family - over a 100 of the friendliest dolphins you are likely to encounter living freely in the chilly waters of the **Moray Firth** an hour and a half's drive from the centre of Aberdeen.

And it's driving like it used to be too; along a rugged coastline of sandy bays, cliff top walks and unspoilt fishing communities looking out on an ever changing ocean where an estimated 150 bottlenose dolphins, the most northerly population in the world, have made their home. It's not hard to see why it's called Scotland's Dolphin Coast.

Sometimes the frisky mammals come so close to the shore than you might not even need binoculars to see them. If the dolphins are having a shy day, try the **Macduff Marine Aquarium** instead.

There are a number of fully licensed charter boats operating in the area whose experienced skippers can bring you near enough to admire these wonderful creatures but never too close to upset them.

There's more nautical fun annually at the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival in Portsoy which takes place towards the end of June. The festival has expanded



over the years to include much beyond boats with music, arts and crafts, and food and drink all forming part of a great festival weekend.

The Banffshire Coast is also home to one of the world's most famous phone boxes – in the village of Pennan where the classic film 'Local Hero' was shot.

[www.visitabdn.com/banffshire-coast](http://www.visitabdn.com/banffshire-coast)

# emerge from the sea :

Crovie - pronounced Crivie - is a collection of houses which appear to emerge from the sea, precariously sandwiched between the water and the bottom of a cliff. Access is by a very steep hill and locals have to transport their shopping and bulky goods by wheelbarrow from a car park at the top of the cliff!



# //STONEHAVEN

There are few small towns in Scotland which can boast among its attractions an Olympic-sized open air swimming pool, a dramatic cliff top castle where Scotland's Crown Jewels were spirited away under the eyes of Cromwell's men, a terrific heritage museum run by dedicated volunteers and a traditional chip shop awarded the title of the best in Britain 2013.

Add to the mix a picturesque harbour, where **The Ship Inn** has been getting rave reviews for its seafood since 1771, and you can see why Stonehaven, just 15 miles south of Aberdeen, is one of the area's very best destinations for a day trip.

The town's most dubious claim to fame is that Stonehaven is the place where, as a joke, the infamous deep fried Mars Bar was created.

But you won't find any on the menu of the **Bay Fish and Chip shop**, run by Calum and Lindsay Richardson. After just seven years in business it was named the best in the UK in the 2013 Fish and Chips Awards and has been receiving accolades



for their policy of using local sustainable produce ever since.

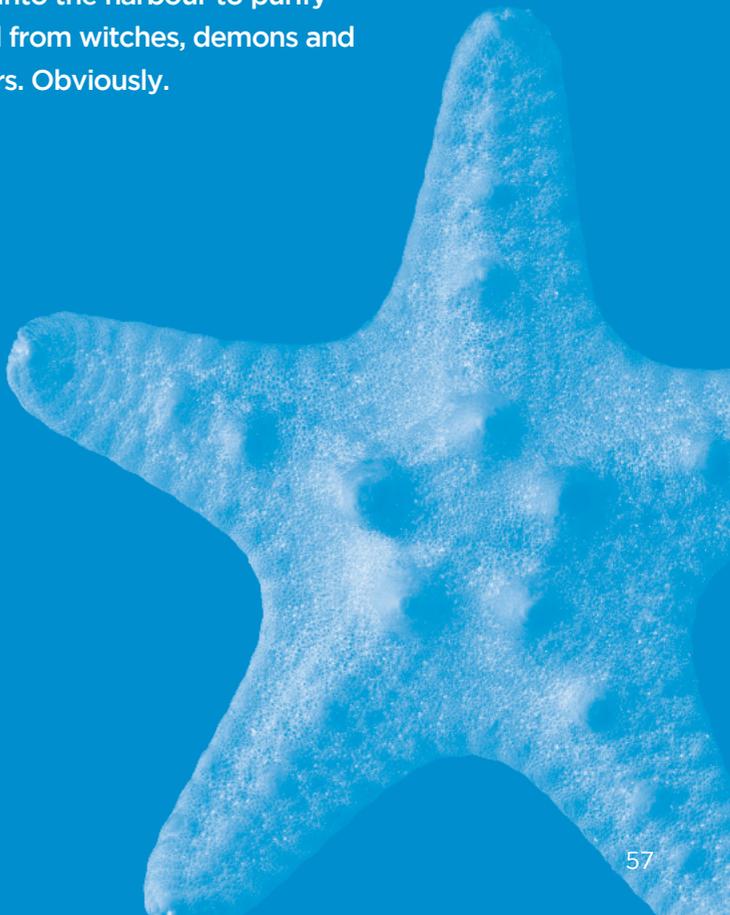
Make that your fuel stop before heading to the outskirts of the town and tackling the climb to the foreboding yet fascinating **Dunnottar Castle**. ([www.dunnottarcastle.co.uk](http://www.dunnottarcastle.co.uk))

If you're looking to re-fuel after your climb why not enjoy some local seafood at **The Marine Hotel**, or book for dinner at the stunning **Tolbooth Restaurant** on the north harbour wall.

# purifying the land :

An ancient fireball ceremony, held every Hogmanay in Stonehaven, is one of the most famous of Scotland's unique festivals.

Thousands gather to watch as many as 60 hardy locals march through the town swinging lighted fireballs - up to three feet in diameter - above their heads. Then, to great cheers, the fireballs are thrown into the harbour to purify the land from witches, demons and monsters. Obviously.



# //SKIING

Head for the hills - the snow covered slopes of the Eastern Cairngorms that is. A journey of less than two hours from Aberdeen will take you to the magical world of sun glistening on fresh snow and some of the finest skiing conditions you could wish for.

Proving that there really is no business like snow business, the area's two centres, **The Lecht Ski Centre** near Tomintoul and **Glenshee Ski Resort** near Braemar, have both been enjoying boom times in past seasons thanks to regular snowfalls.

**The Lecht** is a big favourite with families thanks to its nursery slopes. The centre has 13 lifts including the children's favourite the 'Magic Carpet' ski tow, which transports skiers effortlessly to the top simply by standing astride a giant conveyor belt.

**Glenshee** ski resort, close to Braemar where the Queen spends her summer holidays, has 21 lifts and 36 runs - more than any other UK ski centre. Extending 40 kilometres across four mountains and three valleys it's not surprisingly is a firm favourite with more experienced skiers.



# sun glistening :

“Starting at the summit of a craggy mountain, I’m dazzled by the sun glistening on the neatly-groomed piste. The snow is deep and powdery and all around me colourfully-dressed skiers and snowboarders are hurtling down the slopes, whooping with pleasure. Except this isn’t the French Alps. This is The Lecht ski centre.”

Diana Appleyard, Daily Mail



# //FOOD

Full-on foodie alert! New eateries are popping up faster than you can open a bottle of Prosecco. The area's gastro reputation is growing with culinary greats Jamie Oliver, Nick Nairn and, most recently, Carluccio's opening up in the Granite City.

The Naked Chef has opened **Jamie's Italian** on Aberdeen's Granite Mile – Union Street - and historic Back Wynd is home to 'two floors of foodie heaven' in the **Nick Nairn Cook School** for all day cooking experiences or urban quick cook classes.

Antonio Carluccio followed in the footsteps of his protégé, Jamie Oliver, by launching **Carluccio's** in Union Square, which promises a taste of Italy in the heart of the Granite City.

It's no surprise that such epicurean giants should lay their tables in Aberdeen – nestled between the North Sea and some of the UK's best farm land, chefs can access the bounty of the ocean, farm and forest.

Try **Fusion** in the heart of the city which offers a grazing menu accompanied by a Perrier-Jouet champagne bar, or **Howies** in the West End where a



relaxed atmosphere and fine Scottish dining awaits.

For international flavour, there's Turkish cuisine on offer at **Nargile**, Greek at **Christos Taverna**, Japanese at **Yatai**, French at **Café Bohème**, Indian at **Cinnamon**, **Sabai** serves up Thai and **Zen** offers Chinese.

And as for that cocktail? No need to worry...there's a delightful selection of home-made cocktails at **Bar 99** on Back Wynd.

# foodie [noun] informal :

Foodie [noun] informal: pronounced fu:di;

a person with a particular interest in food; a gourmet: he is an avid foodie and successful restaurateur

Oxford Dictionaries



# //DRINK

You're likely to sample a **Trashy Blonde** on a night out in Aberdeen ... or even a **Tactical Nuclear Penguin!**

Brewed in Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen is home to the first **BrewDog** pub - "a focal point for the craft beer proletariat". Its funky, deconstructed interior has spawned a chain from this outlet close to Marischal College. Alternatively, head over to **6 Degrees North** for a taste of Belgian beer in the heart of the Granite City.

Prefer your ale in more traditional surroundings? Transport yourself back to the classroom and enjoy a pint at the Old School House, either in the old school itself, or outside in the atmospheric beer garden. For a traditional pub ambiance, try **Under the Hammer** where you are guaranteed to enjoy a relaxing beverage in laid back surroundings. Catch up with friends in centrally located **McGinty's**, where a true Scottish welcome is always on tap.

A must-visit for cocktail aficionados is **Orchid** where experts create cocktails ranging from the traditional to the more adventurous tipples. Langstane Place is the location for stylish cocktail bar, **Dusk**,



and **Tipling House** serves up an array of cocktails in its busy central bar, whilst the eclectic **99 Bar and Kitchen** also creates drinks using only the best ingredients.

Fancy something a little bit different? Try **Krakatoa** on Trinity Quay where you'll find unusual beers and live music intertwined in an atmospheric setting. More live music and traditional Irish refreshments can be found in lively **Malones** and **O'Neills**.

# fantastic brews :

“What a great little place, I don’t even know where to start. Between the fantastic brews and the even better service from the awesome staff who really know what they’re doing - if you’re a real lover of beer, this is your mecca.”

**BrewDog**  
Trip Advisor Jan 2013



# //LOCAL PRODUCE

If there's no chocolate in heaven, somebody once wrote, I'm not going. Well heaven can wait because here in the Granite City we have one of the best chocolatiers in the country - and he is still only in his early twenties.

Jamie Hutcheon founded **Cocoa Ooze** at his mother's home in Netherley, near Stonehaven, when he was 17 and now creates mouth-watering, luxury hand-made chocolates from his base in Peterculter, which also doubles as a coffee shop.

Whether it's a gift for someone special - and let's face it that someone is often you - Jamie and his dedicated team can produce exquisite chocolate treats to order. The ready-made versions, available in the shop or online, are pretty good too.

Having an excellent choice of sea food will come as little surprise considering Aberdeen has one of the longest established ports in the UK. The neighbouring town of Peterhead is the largest white fish port in the UK, whilst nearby Fraserburgh is the largest shellfish port. You can try some of this produce overlooking Aberdeen's



picturesque coastline at the **Silver Darling** restaurant and just south of the city in Stonehaven at **The Tolbooth**.

Aberdeen is of course famous for its Angus beef. Aberdeen Angus is a 200 year old breed of cattle which is world renowned for its flavoursome and succulent cuts of meat. Aberdeen Angus can be sampled in various venues across the city. It's a common feature on the menus of many restaurants in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

If a steak doesn't take your fancy you could always sample an Aberdeen Rowie - a delicacy of many names so you may have to ask for a buttery or a roll depending on which area you're in. A Rowie is a traditional bread product, often salty to the taste and can be eaten almost any way you feel like. They can be eaten warm or cold with butter or jam, some are even made with cheese.

# 24lbs of chocolate :

People in the UK are the third biggest consumers of chocolate in the world after Switzerland and Lichtenstein. According to the latest figures we eat 24lbs of chocolate each year.



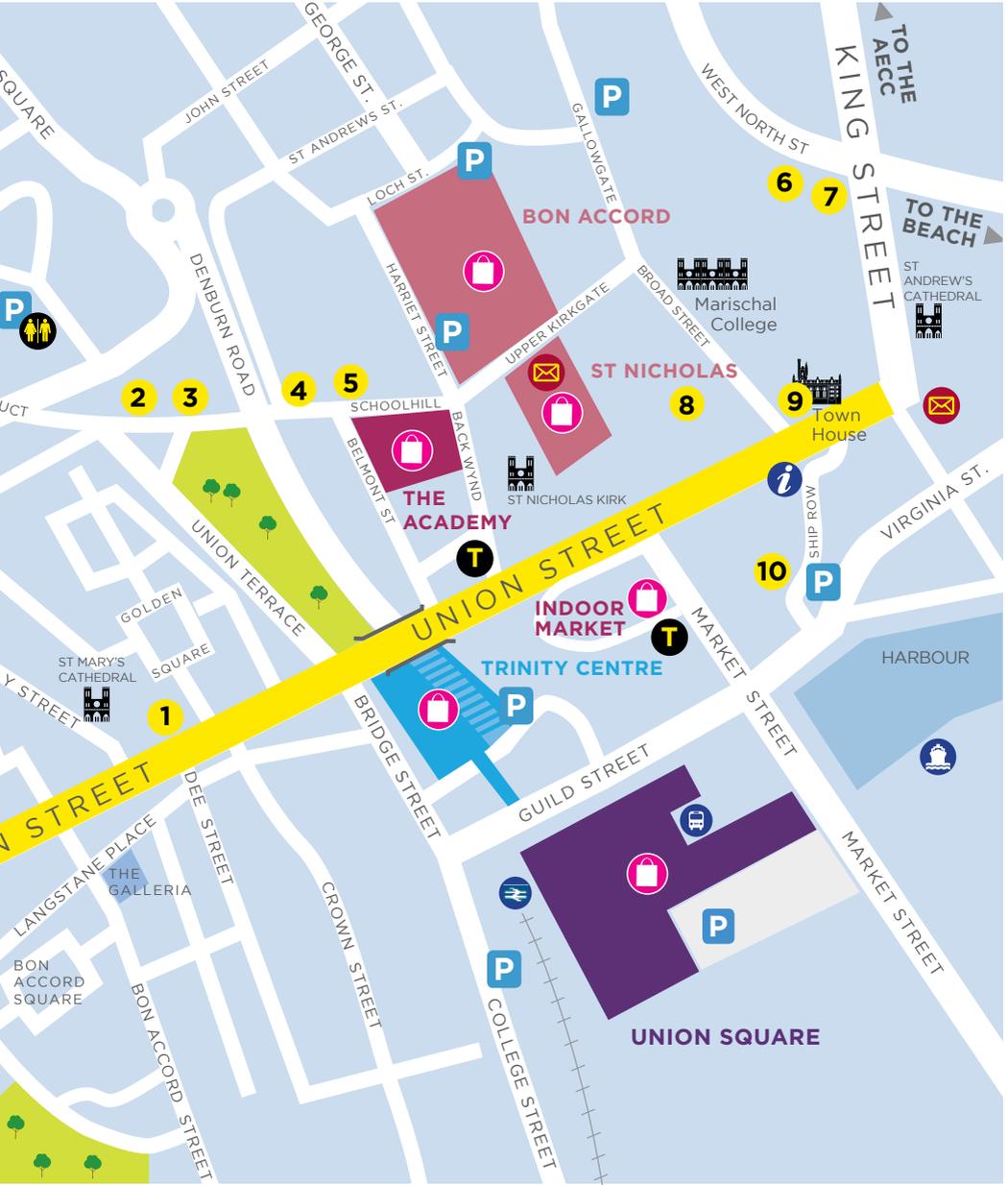
# //MAP

## Key:

-  TRAIN STATION
-  BUS STATION
-  FERRY TERMINAL
-  PARKING
-  TAXI RANK
-  SHOPPING CENTRE
-  POST OFFICE
-  PUBLIC TOILETS
-  TOURIST INFORMATION

-  1 MUSIC HALL\*
-  2 CENTRAL LIBRARY
-  3 HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE
-  4 COWDRAY HALL\*
-  5 ART GALLERY\*
-  6 LEMON TREE
-  7 ARTS CENTRE
-  8 PROVOST SKENE'S HOUSE\*
-  9 TOLBOOTH
-  10 MARITIME MUSEUM
-  CATHEDRAL
-  GARDENS
-  UNION STREET Shopping area







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