

12 PLACES YOU WON'T BELIEVE ARE IN *SCOTLAND*

Think you need to go long-haul to discover white sandy beaches and clear blue waters? Think again with these stunning Scottish destinations...

We often forget how beautiful our country is and how many places there are to discover right on our doorstep.

To make this your most exciting and adventurous summer yet, we've rounded up 12 incredible places that look straight out of an exotic land...

1. Can you guess where this breathtaking beach is located?

While your mind may wander to exotic places and warmer climates, you might also be interested to hear that this stunning beach is right on your doorstep.

Perched on the Isle of Harris, this Hebridean wonder, otherwise known as Horgabost beach, boasts stunning white sand, a tranquil vibe and clear blue water... a perfect place to spend your Scottish summer, no matter what the weather!

BEAUTIFUL BEACHES



2. Oldshoremore Beach, Sutherland

You might be thinking that this beach is somewhere in the south of France, but in fact it is right here in Scotland. This mesmerising clear aqua water and white sand are actually from Oldshoremore Beach in Sutherland.

While the coastal path to get there is a little rocky (it is best to pack comfortable walking shoes!), this secluded spot is well worth the trek as it gives visitors a chance to relax or explore magical coves, all while immersing themselves in the gorgeous view.



3. St. Ninian's Isle Tombolo

Although you might think the Caribbean plays host to some of the clearest blue waters in the world, it's time to think again.

Remote and unspoilt, St. Ninian's Isle tombolo, also referred to as the beach connecting the island to the mainland, is a picture perfect destination.

Plus, at low tide the tombolo is around 70 metres wide and you can even take a dip if you fancy. In fact, a few years ago *Travel* magazine even named this one of the best places in the world to swim, alongside Australia and the Mediterranean.



4. The Monks Beach, Isle of Iona

When you picture soft sand that goes for miles and glistening water, your mind might imagine a tropical beach. But we've got a secret to spill... this one is actually on the Isle of Iona.

This white shell sand beach, called The Monks or Traigh Ban Nam Monach, which is Gaelic for 'white strand of the monks', is the perfect destination to unwind in beautiful scenery and to spot the local sealife. And, as it is located at the top of the island, it tends to be quieter than other Scottish beaches – making it an uber tranquil location!



5. Sanna Bay, Lochaber

Think you have to travel far afield in order to spot exotic wildlife and sealife? Well, Scotland also has amazing animal sightings to offer.

Boasting a turquoise sea and coastal scenery, Sanna Bay in Lochaber allows visitors to have a wander over hidden coves and rocky islets. Plus, keep your eyes peeled for possible sightings of dolphins, whales, sea eagles, otters and even pine martens. So, while it might not be a kangaroo or a koala, at least you know you're safe from deadly spiders and poisonous snakes!



6. Clachtoll Beach

While you may think this image was taken off the coast of Portugal, it was actually captured on Clachtoll Beach.

Although Clachtoll might appear to only be crofts and farms at first view, its beach really is the cream of the crop. Plus, with unrivalled greenery, jagged rocks and a vast expanse of turquoise water, it's no wonder many would confuse it with one of Portugal's wonders. For visitors looking to be lulled by the sound of the water, this is a must-visit destination on your travel bucket-list.

7. Loup of Fintry, Stirling

Somewhere that wouldn't look out of place in a fantasy film is the Loup of Fintry in Stirling.

Surrounded by green hills, a rocky edge and a waterfall standing at 94 feet high, this captivating sight will make you feel like you're starring in your very own movie.

Plus, according to locals, the waterfall is at it's most stunning after rain or snow, making it perfect for a Scottish 'summer' trip!



SECLUDED SPOTS

8. Buachaille Etive Mòr

You'd be forgiven for thinking that this dramatic shot was taken in Iceland (or on the set of *Game of Thrones*!) with the mysterious mist and jagged landscape. However, you're actually looking at Buachaille Etive Mòr.

Although walking fans might spot it as one of the best known Munro peaks, for those who are more into their photography, this impressive summit is a remarkable sight. Marvel at the mountain peak or take in the stunning surroundings of a near-perfect pyramid shape in Glen Etive.

However, if you do decide to trek up this mountain it is important you're careful as, according to the Walking Highlands group, the descent is very steep and has uneven terrain in places – that's why we find it best to take a photo for Facebook at the bottom!

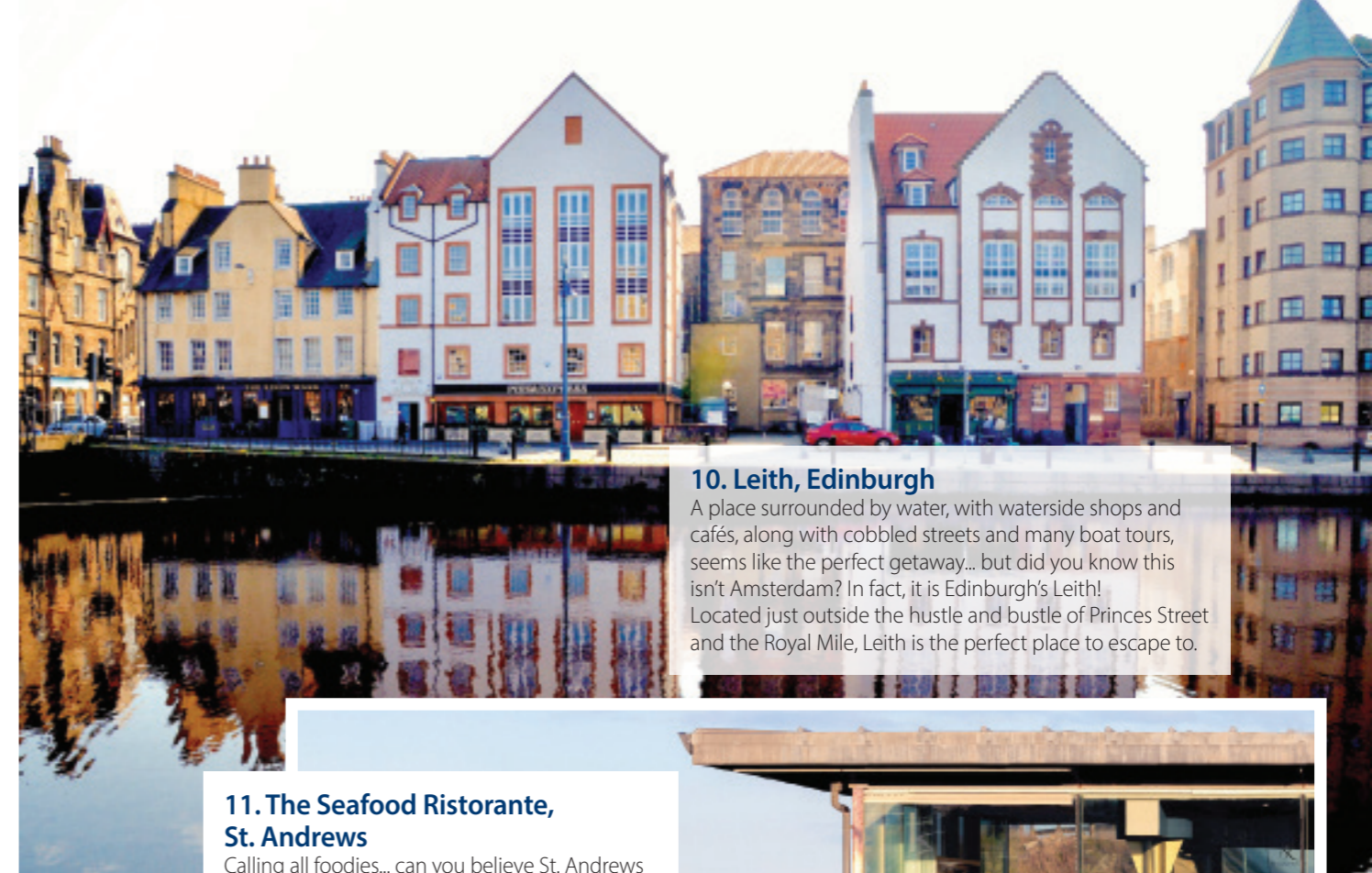


UNFORGETTABLE PLACES

9. Samye Ling, Dumfries and Galloway

It turns out you don't have to travel all the way to Tibet or Thailand to visit an authentic Buddhist temple; there's one right here in Dumfries and Galloway.

Founded in 1967, Scotland's Tibetan Buddhist Centre, Samye Ling, is out of this world. Open all year round, visitors can visit the temple (open from 6am to 9pm) and are free to stroll around the peace garden or can even stay overnight... without the need to embark on a 9,226 mile round trip!

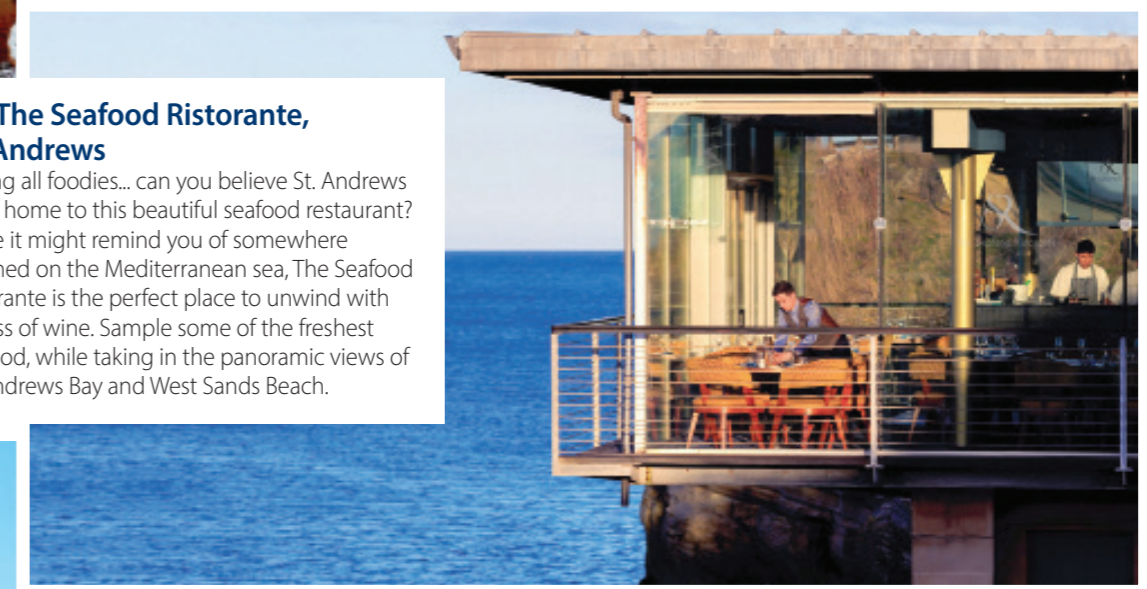


10. Leith, Edinburgh

A place surrounded by water, with waterside shops and cafés, along with cobbled streets and many boat tours, seems like the perfect getaway... but did you know this isn't Amsterdam? In fact, it is Edinburgh's Leith! Located just outside the hustle and bustle of Princes Street and the Royal Mile, Leith is the perfect place to escape to.

11. The Seafood Ristorante, St. Andrews

Calling all foodies... can you believe St. Andrews plays home to this beautiful seafood restaurant? While it might remind you of somewhere perched on the Mediterranean sea, The Seafood Ristorante is the perfect place to unwind with a glass of wine. Sample some of the freshest seafood, while taking in the panoramic views of St. Andrews Bay and West Sands Beach.



12. Portree Harbour, Isle of Skye

Nothing beats a beautiful, tranquil harbour... unless it's in Scotland of course! Many would be forgiven for thinking this one was captured somewhere in Spain when in fact, it is of Portree harbour in Skye.

Traditionally known as a fishing village, Portree Harbour is also an art lover's dream. Not only is the harbour surrounded by clear blue water, cute little fishing boats and a wealth of greenery, it also plays host to some of the most colourful houses in the world. Ranging from yellow and green to blue and pink, it truly is out of this world.

