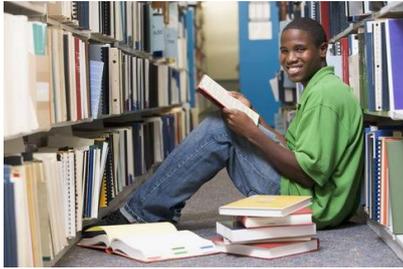


THE WORLD'S THREE CITIES OF LITERATURE



The UNESCO Cities of Literature programme was founded in 2004 and has chosen three world cities, which provide the greatest opportunity to indulge in literature. Somewhat in keeping with political correctness, the three cities represent three different continents - Iowa City, Melbourne and Edinburgh.

Many modern tourists consider a place to be worth visiting if there is plenty to see and do. Cultural elements are often narrowed down to just monuments or theatres, yet many neglect the beauty of literature. After all, one doesn't really need to visit Stratford to read Shakespeare. However, UNESCO has rightly pointed out that the presence of such materials in the place of their origin certainly lends the places a certain magic.

The case of Edinburgh as the first city of literature in the world is particularly spectacular. The Scottish cultural centre was and is the home to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson and Sir Walter Scott. These are just a few examples of literary greats to emerge from Edinburgh and the city is known to be built on books. It is the absolute paradise for the traditional bookworm. Special trails, events and festivals dedicated to local writers lure crowds of tourists to the city every year.

Moving down under: it is worth noting that **Melbourne is by far the biggest book centre in Australia**, with more bookshops per head than anywhere else. There is a robust publishing environment to encourage writers and the number of literature enthusiasts in Melbourne is rising all the time. The Americas are represented by the "Athens of the Midwest", or Iowa City as the third city of literature. The Iowan library in fact has more patrons than the whole place itself, leading to the UNESCO recognition. The activities organised by the famous library are almost entirely focused on promoting literature to outsiders even more than ever before.

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