

# Luxury and Golf: Where It All Began

A trip to the UK is never complete without a visit to **Scotland**, the birthplace of golf. St Andrews is located on the east coast of Scotland, about an hour from Scotland's Capital City, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh has direct Flights from the major European Capitals, and, from the Eastern Seaboard of North America. For those using Private Jets, direct access to St Andrews can be had using RAF Leuchars, a NATO Base only 5 minutes from the Old Course.

## The Cradle of Golf

Golf (from the Old Scots word "gowfe" meaning to hit or swipe) came to life on natural unfashioned land over 600 years ago as a pastime for locals and fishermen. It was, and remains, a sport played on links ground; the turf and whins (a thick prickly bush) linking the sea and sand, with grazing ground inland. Changing winds produce an **Old Course** which rarely plays the same way on two consecutive days, with wide fairways and 7 double greens, it is unique in the Game today, and requires a calm mind, patience, and skill more than to power.



In its early layout, the Old Course had 12 holes, 10 of which were played both out and in, making a total of 22 holes. As play increased, the first four holes (all of which were played twice) were combined in 1764 to make two holes, leaving a total of 18 holes. Over time, this became the standard number of holes for Golf Courses all over the world.

St. Andrews is also home to the prestigious **University** of the same name (founded in 1412AD), whose students add colour and vibrancy to the Town in term time.

Aside from the Old Course, the cemetery and ruins of **St. Andrews Cathedral** (burial ground to 8 Open Champions) offer a short acquaintance with early Golf's worthy figures. And there's **St. Rules Tower**, the oldest surviving building in St. Andrews, for commanding views of the Town and the West Sands.

St Andrews has adapted to modern needs at its own pace. In 1824, **1 Golf Place** began to be used as a meeting place for Golfers, then in 1877, William Rusack built his **Hotel**, still in use today, and, in 1896, **Hamilton Hall** was built (as the Grand Hotel); sadly, it now lies vacant.

## Luxurious Pastime

While Golf in Scotland has always been regarded as “the people’s game”, recognition of the need to service the luxury market was recognised in 1974, with the opening of the Old Course Hotel, and in 1997, St Andrews Bay was opened (now managed by Fairmont). Both Hotels are well worthy of their Five Star rating. They also offer activities for those who do not venture out on to the Golf Course.



Already one of Europe's finest five-star resorts, the **Old Course Hotel** has recently undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment, lifting it to unprecedented new heights in luxury. Situated alongside the hallowed 17th 'Road Hole' of the legendary Old Course, the hotel offers a warm welcome in the finest tradition of Scottish hospitality and a unique choice of restaurants and bars.

A completely new concept for the UK, the '**Kohler Waters Spa**' opened recently with eleven treatment rooms and the wonderfully innovative thermal suite featuring hydrotherapy pool, plunge pool, Japanese salt steam room and a light therapy sauna. These final touches come together with the indoor pool featuring a spectacular waterfall, fitness suite, exercise studio, crystal steam room and nail studio to provide one of Europe's most stunning spas.

An enticing choice of dining experiences are available; fine dining in the Road Hole Grill, Italian influenced cuisine in the relaxed atmosphere of Sands Bar & Restaurant, a Scottish-American menu at Duke's Clubhouse and the Jigger Inn, a popular golfing pub serving real ale and good wholesome food.

Sitting on the summit of a spectacular cliff top, **Fairmont St Andrews** and its two stunning golf courses have breathtaking panoramic views of St Andrews Bay and the Firth of Tay and the medieval skyline of St Andrews. It is one of the premier conference and leisure destinations in Scotland.

From the pristine fairways of the Golf Courses (the Torrance and the Kittocks) to the Grand Ballroom or the Conference facilities it is a philosophy that pervades every corner of its 520 acres.

The driveway to the Hotel's entrance canopy runs through the Golf Courses, looks out to sea and certainly creates a sense of arrival. Valet parking takes care of the car and helpful concierges are always on hand.



Step indoors to a flickering fire in an impressively wide, castle-style hearth. Above the mantle-piece is a regal portrait of James VI, the Scots King who later became the first King of Great Britain. Externally, the Hotel has the profile of a French château; indoors it is largely modern with some 21st century touches. Stroll past the handsome entrance and past the inviting and stylish, Kittock's Den Bar and, the mezzanine level the stylish Esperante Restaurant awaits.

Look out over an open-plan, double-height foyer with seating and dining areas including The Sports Bar, and survey the views across the Firth of Tay. On the lower level you can find the newly refurbished and extensive Spa and access to the Conference and Meeting Suites.

### **Beautiful Scenery**

Scotland offers much by way of grand scenery, beautiful Lochs and Mountains and some unique sights such as the Castles at Edinburgh and Stirling, the Wallace Monument, and Palaces at Holyrood (Edinburgh), Scone and Glamis (both Perth) and Inverlochy (Fort William), not to mention the Queen's former Yacht RMS Britannia (berthed in Edinburgh). **The Edinburgh International Arts Festival** (one of the largest in the World) takes place in August, with one of its highlights being the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, hosted on the ramparts of **Edinburgh Castle**.

Photos used with the kind permission of St Andrews Golf Tours and the Old Course Hotel

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