

EDINBURGH

Peter Swain finds challenging greens dotted amid arresting Scottish scenery



1 GULLANE
WHERE IS IT? 33km east of the city.
WHAT'S IT LIKE? Three great courses make Gullane one of the most visitor-friendly clubs in the area. No1 has seen continuous play since 1884, and regularly hosts the Open qualifier and Amateur Championships. Hilly terrain and the prevailing west wind make the 6,548-yard links feel much longer, with the seventh tee affording fabulous views over the Firth of Forth and Muirfield just along the coast. No2 is almost as long and just as difficult, while No3 is shorter but tighter. Traditional links golf just about at its finest.
CONTACT Gullane Golf Club, Gullane; tel +44 (0)1620 842 255; gullanegolfclub.com
PRICE No1, weekday £96, weekend £111; No2, weekday £48, weekend £53; No3, weekday £31, weekend £37. Winter about half price. Carts £30, caddies £40, trolleys £5.
CLUB HIRE Taylor Made, £25.
CLUB HOURS No1 10.30am-12pm, 2.30pm-4pm; No2 and No3 8am till late.
MINIMUM HANDICAP No1 24 for men, 30 for ladies; none on No 2 and 3.
FACILITIES Three 18-hole courses: No1 par-71, 6,548 yds; No2 par-71, 6,385 yds; No3 par-68, 5,259 yds. Good driving and short game practice area.
AFTER THE GOLF Open 8am-9pm, the friendly visitors' clubhouse serves standard bar food. Players on No1 can use the more traditional members' clubhouse.

2 MUIRFIELD
WHERE IS IT? 34km east along the East Lothian coast.
WHAT'S IT LIKE? The host of 16 Opens, including the 2013 Championship, Muirfield is reckoned by Jack Nicklaus to be the best course in Britain. The 1891 Old Tom Morris layout was redesigned by Harry Colt, and has since been re-modelled to combat recent equipment changes. Driving is relatively straightforward, with all the trouble on the approach shots – the pot bunkers are severe, and greens, like the standout par-three 13th, wicked in their subtlety. This is a classic links, so when the wind blows and the rough is up, low and straight beats high and crooked every time.
CONTACT Duncur Road, Muirfield; tel +44 (0)1620 842 123; muirfield.org.uk
PRICE £195 for one round, £250 for two rounds on the day. £110 from mid-November to mid-March. Caddies (£40) are bookable a day ahead. Trolleys £5; buggies £35.
CLUB HIRE Not available.
CLUB HOURS Visitors play on Tuesdays and Thursdays (only if they are with a member on other days). First tee 8.30am, last 9.50am, with a second round playable after lunch.
MINIMUM HANDICAP 18; certificates may be requested.
FACILITIES The par-71 links plays 7,245yds. There's a full practice area but no pro shop.
AFTER THE GOLF The classic clubhouse offers a traditional British luncheon – think roasts and treacle pudding. The bar closes at 7pm. After 10am, a jacket and tie must be worn in the lounge and dining room.



FACT FILE
 Peter Swain stayed in the 23-room Lutyens-designed Greywalls hotel (greywalls.co.uk), which overlooks Muirfield and has a Gertrude Jekyll garden and an Albert Roux restaurant. visitscotland.com

3 BRAID HILLS
WHERE IS IT? 5km south of the city centre.
WHAT'S IT LIKE? Founded in 1893, the blue-collar Edinburgh Leisure course is a keenly priced gem. Admittedly short, with only three par-fives and several driveable par-fours, it crisscrosses seriously wild, hilly terrain, and despite being only a ten-minute drive from Edinburgh castle, feels more like the Highlands. With majestic views of Arthur's Seat and the Firth of Forth beyond, the course is defended by steeply sloping fairways, penal gorse and the wind.
CONTACT Braid Hills Approach, Edinburgh; tel +44 (0)131 447 6666; edinburghleisure.co.uk/venues/braid-hills-golf-course
PRICE Weekdays £22, weekends £25. No carts or caddies.
CLUB HIRE Various brands, average quality, £18. Trolley £4.50.
CLUB HOURS Weekend 6.30am-8pm, weekdays 7am-8pm.
MINIMUM HANDICAP None.
FACILITIES A 5,858-yd, par-71, 18-hole course, plus the par-33, nine-hole Wee Braids playing 2,149 yds. No practice amenities but Braid Hills Golf Centre next door has a driving range and short game area, plus an American Golf shop.
AFTER THE GOLF The likes of bacon rolls can be organised ahead, otherwise the basic clubhouse has no catering facilities. The coffee shop in the Golf Centre, open 9am-7pm, has excellent food and drink.



4 NORTH BERWICK
WHERE IS IT? 38km east of the city.
WHAT'S IT LIKE? Regularly used for Open qualifiers, golf has been played on this venerable turf for more than 200 years – many believe it to be one of Scotland's finest traditional links. With a wall running just in front of the skinny 13th green, and a deep swale right across the middle of the 16th green, the course has its quirks, but at its best – as on the heavily contoured signature par-three 15th – this is a magnificent test of golf. The pot bunkers are small and deep, the rough in high summer, punitive. The wind makes a two-iron more useful than a five-wood.
CONTACT New Club House, Beach Road, North Berwick; tel +44 (0)1620 892 135; northberwickgolfclub.com
PRICE Weekdays £90, weekends £95; winter £65. Caddies £40.
CLUB HIRE Taylor Made and Titleist, £25.
CLUB HOURS Mon-Fri 10am to last tee-off at 4pm. Weekends after 12.30pm.
MINIMUM HANDICAP Men 28, ladies 36. Certificate may be requested.
FACILITIES The 18-hole par-72 links measures 6,464 yards. Practice green but no long game facilities.
AFTER THE GOLF The welcoming clubhouse, open from 8.30am to mid-evening, classes visitors as members for the day. Non-playing partners are welcome. Dining can be informal or fine, with the accent on traditional Scottish fare.

