



*David McGuffin's*  
**EXPLORING EUROPE**

# **ST. ANDREWS**

## **DESTINATION GUIDE**



# INDEX

[Saint Andrews Church and Town](#) - 2 pg

[The University of St. Andrews](#) - 3 pg

[Saint Mary on the Rock](#) - 4 pg

[Golf at Saint Andrews](#) - 5 pg

## **Saint Andrews Church and Town**

Long before it became the world's golf capital, Saint Andrews was first renowned as a religious center and then as Scotland's oldest university town. It was initially called Kilrymont, and its earliest inhabitants were farmers and fishermen.

The town was transformed in the medieval era with the arrival of monks, pilgrims, and academics. The name was changed to Saint Andrews because, according to legend, early monk missionaries brought the bones of the apostle Saint Andrew to this location.

Construction began on **Saint Andrews' great Cathedral** in 1160. It stood as the largest building in Scotland for seven centuries, which helped to establish Saint Andrews as the center of religious life in the country. This also made the Saint himself hugely influential; pilgrims came here from all over Europe, and Saint Andrew soon became the patron saint of Scotland.

**The university** was founded in 1413, the first in Scotland, and Saint Andrews continued to expand during the Middle Ages, becoming an important trading center.

In the 16th century, the city experienced a turbulent period. The Catholic Archbishop of Saint Andrews, Cardinal David Beaton, was the leader of the anti-Protestant movement in the Scottish church, and he orchestrated the trials and executions of several heretics until his assassination.

Then, in 1559, the Calvinist John Knox preached a fiery sermon at Holy Trinity Church, sparking a riot in the congregation. Knox's followers sacked Andrews Cathedral, signaling the beginning of the Scottish Reformation and ending the town's religious influence.

As you walk around, you will see reminders of these bloodied times. Martyrs' monument commemorates the Protestant reformers who died, and the street cobblestones are marked where executions took place.

**The University of St. Andrews** is over 600 years old and is the third oldest university in the English-speaking world (after Oxford and Cambridge). It was the first Scottish university to admit women undergraduates in 1892.

[Jump to index](#)

Today, the university's buildings spread across town. Its claim to fame in more recent history: this is where Prince William met Kate Middleton.

**Saint Mary on the Rock** is considered the original location of St. Andrew's relics, and it sits on the site of an even older religious building. Celtic monks built the first chapel to stand here. Though it was ruined after the Reformation, the foundations are still visible, and there are beautiful views out to see from its location near Saint Andrews Harbor.

The ruins of Saint Andrews Cathedral are a must-see attraction for every visitor. Work began on the Cathedral in 1160 and continued for 150 years. At the time of its completion, it was the largest church in Scotland. After the Reformation, stones from the Cathedral were removed and repurposed to build other structures in the town; however, the ruins can still give you a sense of how impressive the original Cathedral must have been in its prime. The buildings are surrounded by a graveyard and encircled by Scotland's most complete monastic enclosure walls.



## **Golf at Saint Andrews**

Golf and Saint Andrews have a long history. The first written record dates from 1552—a charter with the seal of the Archbishop of Saint Andrews granting the townspeople the right to play golf on the Links.

Golf had likely been played there long before that because King James II forbade the sport in Scotland in 1457.

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of Saint Andrews was formed in 1754 and is widely recognized as the global authority of the game (though not in the United States). It published the first “Rules of Golf” in 1897.

The courses at Saint Andrews are publicly owned and, therefore, open to the public. Today, Saint Andrews is recognized as the home of golf, and modern pilgrims to the city arrive with golf clubs in hand.

[Jump to index](#)