



{ SCOTTISH QUALITY }

STRONGEST LINKS

Between St Andrews and Carnoustie are some of Britain's top courses...

WORDS & PHOTOS DAVID WHYTE

Angus and Dundee is a world-class golfing destination, right up there with the very best.

The silvery River Tay forms the southern boundary to the area with the Home of Golf – St Andrews – 12 miles south and Carnoustie roughly the same distance away in the opposite direction.

The city of Dundee sits smack in the middle, regarded as 'the largest village in the world' such is its friendliness. It's an ideal base for a golfing break with a dozen first-class options throughout the area along with equally abundant accommodation and eating alternatives. Pubs compete with cafes in the city's vibrant West End, all maintaining Dundee's ever-friendly vibes.

Staying focused within the city's perimeter, Downfield Golf Club is the star turn, one of the best inland courses in Scotland. On the same leafy estate, Camperdown GC has all its illustrious Open Qualifying neighbour's qualities – but at a much better price. The city's northwest corner is overlooked by Piperdam Golf & Country Club, a

combination of 27 holes of golf, accommodation, leisure and loch fishing.

You have to get out and about though and the county of Angus is one of Scotland's most attractive. Within half-an-hour you can be striding the fairways of Kirriemuir, Brechin, Forfar or Edzell, all great heathland courses that offer superb playing prospects along with stunning views of the nearby Grampian Mountains.

The stunning stretch of coastline hosts several splendid links. Historic Montrose, Arbroath, Monifieth, Panmure and world-famous Open-hosting Carnoustie with its three courses meaning you're spoiled for choice no matter your budget or handicap.

And to make sure you get the most out of your Scottish visit we've also sought out plenty of activities and sites off the course (see page 137), highlighted some additional must-play courses and tracked down the top three Dundee accommodation deals (page 138) to ensure you can enjoy a luxury stay without breaking the bank.

1. CARNOUSTIE

C: Par 72, 6,945 yards. B: Par 68, 6,028 yards. BL: Par 65, 5,256 yards

In recent years the Championship course has reasserted itself as the 'bad boy' of the Open Championship.

But us mere mortals must realise, it's only mean to the cream. There's room out there especially off the visitor tees and if you relax and find your rhythm, you could be in for a pleasant surprise. The turf is tight and vibrant and the greens large and accommodating.

Having said that the 16th, 17th and 18th are known as the 'sting in the tail', and a great finale to the so-called 'Toughest Course in the World.'

The neighbouring Burnside and Buddon layouts are nowhere near as demanding but just as enjoyable, making the £160 combination ticket to tackle all courses top value.

VITAL STATISTICS

Location: 12 miles north of Dundee.
Contact: 01241 802270 or www.carnoustiegolflinks.co.uk
Green fees: C: £135. B: £37. BL: £32.
 Combination ticket (all three): £160.



COURSE PLANNER
 Dundee is a good base with Downfield and the Piperdam resort on the doorstep. Carnoustie is 12 miles further north and all courses are within short driving distance.

SEE 1000s OF COURSE PICTURES & SCORECARDS ON THE TG WEBSITE



DATA BANK

▶ OFF-COURSE

- Starting from Carnoustie explore Angus' resplendent glens and sites of historic interest aboard an eight-seater Asquith reproduction limousine for £130pp. Call 01241 851333.
- Dundee's West End (Nethergate & West Port) is the premier spot for pubs, clubs and restaurants.
- The Doghouse is Dundee's best Music Venue – see www.facebook.com/dundeedoghouse
- Glamis Castle is the outstanding stately pile, birthplace of the Queen Mother, worth a visit for its grand gardens and ghosts! Admission is £9.50.
- Climb the plug of a volcano (you can drive up). The views from the top of Dundee's Law are fabulous.
- RRS Discovery was built in Dundee for the British National Antarctic Expedition led by Robert Scott and Ernest Shackleton. The ship is now the centrepiece of a visitor attraction on the waterfront. Admission is £8.

▶ DID YOU KNOW...

- The Declaration of Arbroath, signed at Arbroath Abbey in 1320, greatly influenced the shaping of the US Declaration of Independence.
- The 'Wee Red Toon' of Kirriemuir was birthplace to JM Barrie, the author of Peter Pan, legendary rebel rocker, AC/DC's Bon Scott and the geographer, Sir Hugh Monro.
- Dundee bookseller, James Chalmers (1782-1853) invented the adhesive postage stamp.
- The Buick Car Company of America was founded by émigré David Buick of Arbroath.
- The Victoria and Albert Museum is poised to open an offshoot in Dundee, its first outside London.



Straight drives are rewarded at the wonderful Downfield.



Montrose's Medal course is a stern test.



Edzell's varied course has lots of wildlife.

2. DOWNFIELD Par 73, 6,822 yards

This is one of the UK's great inland courses – a joy to encounter.

Downfield is a sterling example of how straight drives return rewards, but steer a couple of club-lengths offline and you've had it!

There are times when you need that extra bit of poke such as the par-5 4th. The call of the wild is never far off though and a tango in the trees can be the upshot. At the end of the day, like any good design, Downfield rewards the brave and respectful.

The 11th is the most memorable hole. Again, you need to steer a confident drive down the right and let it release on the sloping fairway. Then you can take on the ultimate challenge, a double dose of water – a long gamble even from a good lie.

▶ VITAL STATISTICS

Location: North of Dundee city centre via A923.
Contact: 01382 825595 or visit www.downfieldgolf.com
Green fees: Mon-Fri: £59 a round & £69 per day. Sun afternoons: £45 a round. Sat: Members only.

3. MONTROSE Medal course: Par 71, 6,203 yards

This low profile links doesn't have the international clout of nearby Carnoustie or the upscale eminence of Royal Aberdeen but they do welcome us average Joe's... and give a considerable run for not-so-much money!

Like Carnoustie, it's run by the people for the people. These undulating links have been providing such distraction for 500 years. A round on Montrose Medal is a step back in time. Ben Crenshaw mentions 'a magnificent stretch of marvellously natural ground which depicts how the game was born.' The Medal maybe isn't as silky smooth as Kingsbarns or have the bailouts of Carnoustie, but it's altogether gnarlier and a joy to encounter.

▶ VITAL STATISTICS

Location: Follow the A935 coastal route to Montrose.
Contact: 01674 672932 or www.montroselinks.co.uk
Green fees: Mon-Fri & Sun: £50 a round or £65 a day. Sat: £55 a round. **2-FOREI-1:** Mon-Fri.

4. EDZELL Par 71, 6,445 yards

Like a smorgasbord, Edzell's Old Course offers a sample of everything golf has to offer. Set near the Grampian Mountains, you'd think it would be heathland but generally-speaking it's a lean, linky parkland.

Whatever the pigeon-hole, it's one of Braid's finest tests. By the 2nd you're in the thick of it with a long par 4 by the road with its green hidden from view. Stray and you're in the hay. Edzell's rough – even the semi – is a recipe for near-disaster.

The course is a pleasure with ever-present views of the surrounding Grampians and plenty of wildlife – hawks, buzzards, chaffinches, red squirrels and even deer. The Westwater River trickles past holes 8 and 13 with herons often nearby.

▶ VITAL STATISTICS

Location: Take the B966 west just north of the Brechin by-pass.
Contact: 01356 648462 or www.edzellgolfclub.com
Green fees: Mon-Fri: £40 a round & £52 a day. Sat-Sun: £44/£60.
2-FOREI-1: All week.



The wind provides the toughest test for golfers at Arbroath.

SEE 1000s OF COURSE REVIEWS ON TG WEBSITE



'THOSE IN THE KNOW HAVE KEPT PIPERDAM TO THEMSELVES BECAUSE IT TICKS MOST BOXES'

5. ARBROATH Par 70, 6,200 yards

Arbroath is widely regarded as the underdog of Angus & Dundee yet it's a splendidly enjoyable course. It's certainly not easy especially playing into its perennial winds and the condition and presentation seem to improve every year.

The main East Coast railway line separates the course from the beach so it's linky though the turf is more lush. There is the odd stand of trees but otherwise you're open to the testing wind.

By the 7th – an excellent long short hole nearly always cut by a wind – Arbroath enters its purple patch. The 7th to the 11th are the more testing and the remaining holes are fairly consistent with good bunkering and well contoured, plateau greens.

VITAL STATISTICS

Location: On the A92 between Dundee and Arbroath off the first roundabout before Arbroath.

Contact: 01241 875837

Green fees: Mon-Fri: £30 a round & £35 a day. Sat-Sun: £35/£45.

2-FOREI-1: Mon-Fri.

MORE MUST-PLAYS

● **Camperdown**
Factfile: Par 71, 6,548 yards. **Green fees:** Mon-Fri: £27. Sat-Sun: £32. **Tel:** 01382 431820.

● **Brechin**
Factfile: Par 72, 6,116 yards. **Green fees:** Mon-Fri: £33. Sat-Sun: £35. **2-FOREI-1:** All week. **Tel:** 01356 622383.

● **Kirriemuir**
Factfile: Par 68, 5,510 yards. **Green fees:** Mon-Fri: £36. Sat-Sun: £40. **Tel:** 01575 573317.

● **Panmure**
Factfile: Par 70, 6,360 yards. **Green fees:** Mon-Fri: £75 a round & £95 per day (limited weekend availability). **Tel:** 01241 852460.

● **Monifieth Medal**
Factfile: Par 72, 6,655 yards. **Green fees:** Mon-Fri: £55. Sat-Sun: £65. **Tel:** 01382 535553.

6. PIPERDAM Par 72, 6,396 yards

This relatively new complex on the north-east corner of Dundee seems to have set itself up with a decent 18-hole course, an outstanding par-3 track, great practice facilities, residential lodges, restaurants, swimming pool, spa and a large loch – then never told anyone!

Maybe those-in-the-know have kept it to themselves because Piperdam ticks most boxes.

The Osprey Course, the main 18-hole track, climbs away from the loch before tumbling back down to the 10th. The par-3 11th requires a considerable carry across water and the wet stuff also infringes front and right of the green. The 15th's green is partly tucked behind a stone wall and requires a spot-on drive.

VITAL STATISTICS

Location: A923, three miles beyond Birkhill/Muirhead on the left.

Contact: 01382 581374 or www.piperdam.com

Green fees: Mon-Fri: £34 a round & £54 a day. Sat-Sun: £38/£60.

2-FOREI-1: All week.

TOP DUNDEE DEALS

Three great offers to consider



DEAL #1

Rooms at Apex City Quay Hotel and Spa, Dundee from £65 per night from June 1 to August 31, including use of facilities.

► Enter **B*QSUM** at www.apexhotels.co.uk/Dundee or call 0845 365 0000.

DEAL #2

Four nights' B&B at Hilton Dundee, four rounds (Carnoustie Championship, Montrose, Monifieth & Panmure) plus two dinners for £449pp.

► Call 01382 229271 or e-mail reservations.dundee@hilton.com quoting 'Visit Scotland Driving It Home'.

DEAL #3

Twin room B&B stay at the Carnoustie Hotel in July or August for £95 per night.

► Call 01241 411999, quoting TG.