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LANDFALL SCOTLAND · AREA GUIDE

Living in St Andrews & Fife

Golf, beaches and fishing villages, with Edinburgh a train ride away.

AVERAGE HOME PRICE

£182,000

Fife, Aug 2026. St Andrews itself costs much more

AMERICAN STUDENTS

About 2,270

At the University of St Andrews, 2024/25

NEAREST US FLIGHTS

Edinburgh Airport

Roughly an hour and a quarter by car

TO EDINBURGH BY TRAIN

About 1¼ hours

Train from Leuchars, plus a short bus

Cover photo: Sheila C / Unsplash

Fife is the peninsula between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Tay, just north of Edinburgh. It mixes Edinburgh commuter towns in the south, farmland in the middle and the old fishing villages of the East Neuk on the coast.

At its north-eastern tip is St Andrews, home of Scotland's oldest university and the "home of golf". The university has more American students than any other in the UK, so an American accent here barely turns a head.

GOOD FOR

- Families with a student at St Andrews
- Golfers, obviously
- Coastal village life
- Edinburgh commuters who want more space

PROPERTY

Buying and renting

Across Fife the average home sold for about £182,000 in August 2026, a little below the Scottish average. That average hides a wide range: commuter towns in the south and villages inland are good value, while St Andrews is one of the priciest small towns in Scotland.

In St Andrews, student demand and holiday lets keep rentals tight. Many families look a few miles out instead, in villages such as Strathkinness or Guardbridge, or in the East Neuk.

In the south, Dunfermline, Dalgety Bay and Inverkeithing are popular with people who work in Edinburgh, with trains over the Forth Bridge into the city.

BEFORE YOU COMMIT

- Holiday lets in Scotland need a short-term let licence from the council: check before buying a second home to let out.
- Coastal homes: ask about flood risk and insurance.
- Buying follows the Scottish system, with offers over and a Home Report.

FAMILY & SCHOOLS

Schools and family life

Fife Council runs state schools by catchment. In St Andrews, Madras College is the state secondary school. St Leonards School in the town is independent and teaches the International Baccalaureate, which many international families favor.

Fife is a gentle place to bring up children: beaches, coastal paths and small towns where kids can get around by bus for free until they turn 22.



Boats in Anstruther harbor in the East Neuk of Fife at sunset. Photo: Neil and Zulma Scott / Unsplash

SOCIAL LIFE

Golf, coast and culture

St Andrews has seven public golf courses, including the Old Course, as well as the long West Sands beach and a busy student calendar. The StAnza poetry festival and university events keep the town lively in term time.

Along the coast, the Fife Coastal Path links the East Neuk villages of Crail, Anstruther, Pittenweem and Elie, known for fish and chips, harbors and art galleries. Dundee, with its V&A design museum, is under half an hour away across the Tay.

TRAVEL

Getting around and getting home

St Andrews has no railway station of its own. The nearest is Leuchars, a short bus ride away, with trains to Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. The trip to central Edinburgh takes about an hour and a quarter door to door.

For flights to the US, Edinburgh Airport is the main option. A car makes rural Fife much easier, though the bus network covers the main towns.

COMMUNITY

Finding your people

With more than 2,200 American students at the university, St Andrews has a visible American community. For families, the university's staff networks, school communities and golf clubs are natural starting points.

Elsewhere in Fife, community life centers on village halls, sailing and rowing clubs, and local festivals.

WHERE TO LOOK

A starting shortlist

St Andrews

Medieval streets, the university and the beach. Expensive, and tight for rentals.

East Neuk villages

Crail, Anstruther, Pittenweem and Elie: harbors, cottages and a slower pace.

Cupar & the Howe of Fife

A market town and countryside in central Fife, with better value and a train line.

Dunfermline & Dalgety Bay

Southern Fife, popular with Edinburgh commuters for space and trains.

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Landfall guides for this move

How does buying a home in Scotland work?
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How does renting work in the UK?
yourlandfall.com/guides/renting-in-the-uk

How do schools work in Scotland?
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Sources. Figures checked in November 2026. The Scottish average home price was £198,000 in August 2026. Prices and rents change, so check current listings before you decide.

- UK House Price Index Scotland: August 2026 (GOV.UK): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-for-august-2026/uk-house-price-index-scotland-august-2026
- Times Higher Education: rising US student numbers in the UK: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/rising-us-student-numbers-uk-unsustainable-warns-v-c
- Splitmyfare: Edinburgh to St Andrews by train: https://www.splitmyfare.co.uk/edinburgh-to-st-andrews/
- Transport Scotland: free bus travel for under-22s and over-60s: https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/people-seeking-asylum/

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