

Let's Experiment! Edinburgh Science Festival 2023 turns the city into a living laboratory 1-16 April



14th February 2023

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Edinburgh Science Festival 2023 turns the city into a living laboratory

1-16 April

- Edinburgh Science Festival 2023 is calling on everyone – let's experiment! – and will deliver a world-class live programme getting people of all ages hands-on with science, embracing the concepts of experimentation, innovation, creativity, curiosity and invention that lie at the heart of all scientific disciplines.
- 2023 is a year of transition and stabilisation as the Festival builds on the success of previous recent editions and presents a rich programme of workshops, talks, activities and exhibitions all around the city.
- City Art Centre returns as the Festival's premier family experience with new *FutureFest* and *EarthFest* themed weekends at the National Museum of Scotland bookmarking the Festival.
- Interactive activity *Experimental Life* and large-scale outdoor photography exhibition *Cherish: Shaping Our Planet* are just two examples of the Festival's fantastic free events.

- As always, the Festival connects its audiences with some of the world's most inspiring scientists, researchers and authors in Big Ideas talks: Edinburgh Medallist 2023 – Prof. Marion Nestle, Benita Matofska, Prof. Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Lord Martin Rees, Florence Schechter of the Vagina Museum, Marcus Chown, Prof. Anil Seth, and author Louise Gray.
- On 6 April, *A Climate of Change* talk features First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in conversation with Ambassador Patricia Espinosa, former Executive Secretary of the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2016–2022).

Edinburgh Science Festival is the **first and one of the most respected science festivals in the world**, taking place over the Easter holidays, between **1 and 16 April**. Known for producing **world-class live events**, this year's Festival invites everyone to get hands-on with science and embrace the concepts of **experimentation, innovation, creativity, curiosity and invention that lie at the heart of its 2023 theme – Let's Experiment!**

With innovation and creative thinking across disciplines essential if we are to harness the opportunities and deal with the potential perils and pitfalls of our rapidly changing world, the Festival brings together innovators – **scientists, researchers and practitioners** – who push the frontiers of our knowledge about ourselves and the wider Universe, and sci-curious audiences of all ages for **a variety of talks, workshops and activities in venues around the city**.

The Festival also **becomes a living laboratory** thanks to its experimentation with formats, approaches, and partnerships as it provides new and innovative ways for audiences to interact with science and scientists.

Amanda Tyndall, Festival and Creative Director at Edinburgh Science said: “As we emerge from the disruption of the past few years and confront ongoing wider-world challenges, we remain in a period of transition and stabilisation but are excited by a whole-hearted return to live, hands-on science experiences. We call on audiences of all ages to join us in celebrating all things experimental!”

This year's programme is **spread across 31 venues and locations around Edinburgh and one-third of it is free to access**.

Edinburgh Science Festival continues its **commitment to championing the achievements of women in science and science communication**, and strive for a balance representation of gender in its programming. With **60% of artists and speakers at the Festival identifying as women**, this year's programme offers an invaluable opportunity to hear from some of the world's leading experts in their fields. Just some of the highlights of this year's Women in STEM programme, sponsored by Cirrus Logic, include The Edinburgh Medal Address with Prof. Marion Nestle (12 April), The Long Shot (12 April) with Dame Kate Bingham, Chair of the UK Vaccine Taskforce 2020, Demystifying Bisexuality (14 April) with psychologist Dr Julia Shaw and The N Most Important Symbol in Mathematics(5 April) with mathematician Katie Steckles.

2023 KEY HIGHLIGHTS

City Art Centre (1-15 April) – five floors of hands-on science extravaganza for children between 3 and 12 years old. With 6 new workshops this year – including *Construction Challenges*, *Ella's Wobble*, *Speedy Sails*, *Creative Coding*, *Tech Corner* and **LEGO® Build The Change** – and all-time favourites *E.R. Surgery* and *Splat-tastic*, City Art Centre is the most fun a family can have this Easter holidays. On sale from 1 March.

Experimental Life at the National Museum of Scotland (3-14 April) – new, free, interactive experience inviting everyone to take a deep dive into the weird and wonderful diversity of life. Includes *Trees of Life* installation from *We Throw Switches* and artist Robert Baumgarten exploring Darwin's revolutionary theory of evolution. Developed with support from Creative Scotland through the Scottish Government's Festival Expo Fund and supported by Lumo.

FutureFest (1-2 April) and **EarthFest** (15-16 April) at the National Museum of Scotland – two family-friendly, hands-on weekends bookmarking the Festival, filled with fantastic shows and new activities. First is a celebration of technology, robotics, artificial intelligence, coding, computers, and space while the latter invites the participants to learn more about our planet, the animals that live here and how we can take care of them. Supported by PLACE funding. EarthFest headline sponsor is Cirrus Logic. Both weekends are supported by Headline Festival Community Engagement Partner **LEGO® Build the Change**

Edinburgh Medal (12 April, City Chambers) – the prestigious annual award celebrating the achievements of the women and men of science and their contributions to the humanity. This year's Edinburgh Medal recipient is Prof. Marion Nestle, a pioneer in the study of nutrition, public health and food politics, who will explore the wide-reaching implications of what and how we eat – from production and marketing, to the possibilities of fairer distribution of resources. Supported by the U.S. Embassy London.

Cherish: Shaping Our Planet (23 March-4 May) – a free, large-scale, outdoor photography exhibition on Portobello Promenade which looks at the human impact on the landscapes that support all life and considers how we can cherish its wonders and tread more lightly upon this Earth.

A Climate of Change: Nicola Sturgeon in Conversation with Ambassador Patricia Espinosa (6 April) – climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, but alongside the challenges come valuable opportunities to work together to transform our world for the better. Providing a truly global perspective, Ambassador Patricia Espinosa, former Executive Secretary of the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2016–2022) who was instrumental in efforts to make the Paris Agreement a reality and led crucial climate conversations at COP26 in Glasgow, joins Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, for a fascinating conversation exploring Scottish, and global, efforts to face up to our climate emergency.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Festival for families

For those who performed a surgery, dug up a dinosaur, built a wind turbine and coded their own robot at **City Art Centre**, or got hands-on at the **National Museum of Scotland** with *FutureFest*, *Experimental Life* and *EarthFest* interactive exhibitions, the Festival fun continues with various activities around the city.

Junior Reading Experiment (4-6 April) gives sci-curious young minds a chance to meet science authors while the **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh** presents, among many others trails and workshops, *Frankenstein's Plants: The Revenge* (14-16 April) where children design their own herbarium specimen to take home, and *Spring in the Vegetable Garden* (16 April) – all about growing your own food at home.

Taking to heart Greta Thunberg's words "No one is too small to make a difference.", **Dynamic Earth** presents *Use Your Voice* (1-16 April) an exhibition about young climate activists inspiring the next generation, and explains the wonders of the weather in *Whatever the Weather* (6 & 13 April) workshop for children 1+.

Over at the **Edinburgh Zoo**, animal enthusiasts learn all about our ancestors in *Primates Pop-Up* (6-7 April) activity for all ages and the recent discoveries at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland followed by breakfast and activities in *Eggsperimental Breakfast* (1-2 & 15-16 April).

Out and about, audiences can visit *Cherish: Shaping Our Planet* (23 March – 4 May) photography exhibition on **Portobello Promenade**, take part in *Operation Sabotage* escape room experience at the **National Museum of Flight** (14-15 April), visit **Yellowcraig Beach** to learn how to identify and prepare wild vegetables and seaweeds in a *Guided Walk with Monica Wilde* (8 April) or pop by **The Bayes Centre** for a chance to meet humanoid robots and hear about how they can assist humans in *Meet the Robots* (14 April).

For the rainy stay-at-home days, EdSciFest on Demand is the perfect answer – a free online resource full of engaging workshops, quizzes and self-led trails.

Adult programme overview

Environment/ Climate

With programming for the Planet a continuing focus for the Festival, this year's programme features an inspiring line-up of speakers and events: eminent voice in the climate crisis discussion, Astronomer Royal and former President of the Royal Society, **Lord Martin Rees** explores *If Science Is To Save Us* (3 April), author **Louise Gray** looks at the environmental impact of our favourite fruits and vegetables in *Avocado Anxiety* (3 April), founder of the global network The People Who Share, **Benita Matofska** talks about how sharing and circular economy can fundamentally change the way we live in *Generation Share* (12 April), supported by Zero Waste Scotland. *Emotion and the Climate Emergency* (13 April) features a panel of experts answering the question of whether emotions stop us from thinking rationally about climate action, or are there times when emotion is just what we need to make us strive for a better world?

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