

swept skies on the Castle Promenade. A tip for the tattoo: book seats in the stand facing the castle directly — then the massed pipes and drums will march toward you, and the lone piper who ends the tattoo high on the castle battlements will be clearly in view.

There's a big bonus to visiting Edinburgh at festival time: restaurants stay open late and drinks are served until 1 am at most eateries. Closing time is normally

11 pm, though hotel residents always have recourse to room service. For just those three weeks each year, Edinburgh becomes a night life-oriented city.

Special Scottish evenings with traditional food (cock-a-leekie soup, salmon, Angus beef, and haggis) can be enjoyed along with entertainment at the Caledonian Hotel, Epicure Restaurant, George Hotel, King James Hotel, North British Hotel, and Hotel Oratava in Newington.

But one traditional evening may be enough in a busy festival schedule, and Edinburgh has many fine restaurants. Here are a few you might try: Denzler's, Queen St. (Swiss cuisine); Cosmos, North Castle St. (Italian); Casa Española, Rose St. (Spanish); Queensway Hotel, Queensferry Rd. (run by the owners of Casa Española, but here the accent is French); Howtowdie, Stafford St. (Scots *haute cuisine*: from venison to salmon to grouse); Prestonfield House Hotel, Priestfield Rd (continental and British); Cramond Inn, Cramond Village (Scottish — and try the hors d'oeuvres platter, a meal in itself); and the Cafe Royal, West Register St. (English/continental, three restaurants in one building). Book well in advance during the festival.

If you can be torn away from the Edinburgh Festival, you might travel a few miles for your meal. Houstoun House in Broxburn, some 10 or 12 miles from town, features a five- to six-course table d'hôte menu of elegance and excellence. For a less filling and less formal meal, head east to the Old Howgate Inn in West Howgate. Owned by a Scots/French family with its own vineyard in France, the Howgate specializes in seafood-smorgasbord open sandwiches and lobster and has the best onion soup west of France. The cheese board is a marvel. While having a premeal drink, sample the exotic flavor of gulls' eggs. And if you want more when you're done, the Garrards have a shop attached to the inn where you can buy the same cheeses and wines that they serve.

For names and addresses of suppliers of pipers, reservations for functions in Scotland's stately homes and castles, festival dates, and housing inquiries, contact: The Scottish Tourist Board, 23 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 3EU, phone (031) 332-2433.

Stratford

Instead of Edinburgh, your group may want to combine London with Stratford-on-Avon.

Day One

When combining London and Stratford-on-Avon, a little of the city and a little of the country, one suggestion is to go by coach from Heathrow Airport in London to Stratford, which takes two hours. Stratford is also less than an hour's flight from London via Birmingham. Birmingham Airport is then a half-hour's drive from Scotland. The group can spend the first three days of their trip in central England and can then contrast it with a visit to London before returning to the States.