# Edinburgh Castle to light up with theme park projection, sparking debate over city’s commercialisation



In a move that has sparked widespread discussion about the commodification of public spaces and historic landmarks, Edinburgh Castle is set to be illuminated with a large-scale advertising projection to celebrate the grand opening of Universal Epic Universe, a new theme park at Universal Orlando Resort. The event, scheduled for the evening of Friday, 2 May at 9pm, marks a historic first, transforming the iconic castle into a canvas showcasing the five immersive worlds of the theme park.

The projection mapping and lighting display will feature themes from Celestial Park, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™ – Ministry of Magic™, SUPER NINTENDO WORLD™, How to Train Your Dragon – Isle of Berk, and Dark Universe. Alison Montague, Vice President International Sales & Marketing EMEA for Universal Orlando Resort, commented on the partnership with Historic Environment Scotland: “We are delighted to partner with Historic Environment Scotland who have entrusted us with Edinburgh Castle, a globally recognised icon and one of the most important symbols of Scottish history and culture. Edinburgh Castle is a testament to the power of cultural imagination and forms a fantastic backdrop for us to bring to life the five worlds of Epic Universe.”

The event coincides with the launch of Universal Epic Universe on 22 May and includes a promotional component where guests attending the event will have the chance to win a seven-night trip to Universal Orlando Resort. The prize includes tickets to all four of Universal’s theme parks — Universal Studios Florida, Universal Islands of Adventure, Universal Volcano Bay, and the newly opened Epic Universe — with accommodation at the recently launched Universal Terra Luna Resort.

This projection event is a free ticketed private occasion with limited capacity, and those interested must apply for tickets through an online event listing. The necessity of ticketing means that, during the event, access to view the castle will be restricted primarily to event attendees, temporarily limiting the experience for local residents.

The announcement has reignited debates about the ongoing “Disneyfication” of Edinburgh, a term reflecting concerns about the increasing commercialisation and tourist-focused transformation of the city’s historic and cultural spaces. Eight years ago, Gordon Robertson, then chair of Marketing Edinburgh, publicly advocated for this concept, arguing that the “Disneyfication” of the city could bring investment, job creation, and well-managed visitor experiences. He stated at the time, “Having been in Disney this year with my family, I’m not so sure Disneyfication is a bad thing? At least they’ve invested in their sites, they have a plan, it provides thousands of jobs, their well-trained staff provide a fantastic experience and they’re extremely profitable which is used to invest back into the product.”

Critics point to the impact such events and developments have on local communities, including rising living costs, displacement, and the changing character of neighbourhoods. Edinburgh’s Old Town and areas like Dumbiedykes have felt these pressures acutely, with concerns raised about the loss of traditional community services such as libraries and nurseries in the face of tourism-driven transformation.

Nevertheless, the organisers and partners of the Universal Epic Universe projection see the event as an opportunity to bring a new kind of cultural spectacle to a world heritage site and to connect Scottish audiences more closely with the themed worlds of the theme park.

The Bella Caledonia publication reports this story with particular attention to the broader implications for the city’s public spaces and heritage, commenting on the tension between cultural identity and commercial promotion in one of Scotland’s most prominent historic landmarks.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.disneyfoodblog.com/2025/04/27/epic-universe-is-celebrating-its-grand-opening-by-giving-away-two-free-trips/> - Confirms the Edinburgh Castle projection show on May 2nd and the promotional trip giveaway linked to Universal Epic Universe’s grand opening.
2. <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/04/27/edinburgh-disneyland/> - Reports on Edinburgh Castle’s first Universal Epic Universe-themed projection event and contextualizes debates about 'Disneyfication' in Edinburgh.
3. <https://allears.net/2025/04/27/the-new-way-to-watch-an-epic-universe-castle-show-and-win-a-trip-to-universal-orlando/> - Details the May 2nd projection mapping event schedule, themed worlds featured, and trip giveaway mechanism.
4. <https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/plan-your-visit/opening-times/> - Provides general operational context for Edinburgh Castle, corroborating its status as an active historic site hosting temporary events.
5. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/news/castle-of-light-spectacular-returns-to-edinburgh-castle/> - Demonstrates Historic Environment Scotland’s existing precedent for hosting large-scale light projections at Edinburgh Castle.
6. <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2025/04/27/edinburgh-disneyland/> - Reiterates the partnership between Universal and Historic Environment Scotland, emphasizing the commercial-cultural tensions highlighted in the article.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMib0FVX3lxTE51b3Y4LWhxZnJ4Z2lrWmZqdW01Q2pPLWx0YWhpUmphRmI0S2lvUXl3LVdTTGNpV0tRdzVWdlpqRzNYb24yTVVIODdLeDVhYzhwTzJlcTZmdGRyNHc4STk0ajJnUDI5Q1dFLU50WHViVQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data