

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN YORK

York Minster

A visit to York would be incomplete without a visit to York Minster. York's Minster is renowned all around the world and is the largest medieval gothic cathedral in northern Europe. This is religious architecture on the very grandest scales: over 500 feet in length, 100 feet wide and with a central tower 200 feet high. The cathedral took over 250 years to complete and is the most visited cathedral in Britain. The Minster contains some of the country's oldest and finest stained glass, has the city's best views from the Tower and is rich in historical artefacts, dating back to the Roman age.

City Walls

At 3.4 kilometres long, the beautifully preserved walls are the longest medieval town walls in England. About 2.5 million people walk along all or part of the City walls each year, enjoying some amazing views. The completion of the entire circuit will take approximately 2 hours. There are five main bars or gateways, one Victorian gateway, one postern (a small gateway) and 45 towers. The walls weigh approximately 100,000 metric tonnes.

JORVIK

The JORVIK Viking Centre is a dynamic vision of York in the 10th century. This attraction should not be missed when visiting York as the visitor travels back in time to experience the sounds, smells and images of the city of Jorvik in AD975. State-of-the-art flying capsules fly the visitor over and through the city. Visitors even travel through the houses and bedrooms of the people of Jorvik.

Yorkshire Museum

The Yorkshire Museum is a must-see destination in a tour around the city of York. The museum is home to a treasure trove of historical gems including The Vale of York Viking Hoard, the most significant Viking find in more than 150 years, the head of the earliest portrait statue of Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, and the famous 'Cawood Sword', only the fifth Viking sword of its type ever to be found and by far the best preserved, with a mysterious inscription that has never been solved.

NEW FOR 2012 York's CHOCOLATE Story

This exciting attraction will treat visitors to the inside story of the famous chocolates and sweets that started their lives in York. Favourites expected to have a starring role in the delicious new attraction include the famous Kit Kat and Christmas stocking favourite, Terry's Chocolate Orange; not forgetting a behind-the-scenes look into the lives of the amazing men and women who concocted all these chocolate creations from the 19th to the 21st century. The immersive experience will tell the story of York's confectionery trading and manufacturing past, bringing the story up to date and making sure that visitors get lots of opportunities to interact with chocolate.

DIG

Dig offers a unique and exciting archaeological experience. St Saviours Church (formerly the Archaeological Resource Centre), has been transformed into a simulated archaeological investigation including site huts, a science laboratory and research library. Visitors can try their hand at excavating parts of a Roman fortress, Viking City, Medieval burial site and Victorian workers cottages. You can discover real artefacts that have been discovered by archaeologists from York Archaeological Trust in York over the last twenty-five years.

Cold War Bunker

The Cold War Bunker offers visitors the chance to take a guided tour of a semi-submerged secret bunker on the outskirts of York. At the height of the Cold War, Britain had a total of 1,561 nuclear shelters, designed to withstand severe bombardment. The shelter is one of the best surviving examples of its type in the UK and the first to be designated a Scheduled Monument. Complete with the original fixtures and fittings, visitors can experience an atmosphere, which is as authentic as that found in films such as the Ipress File or the serial Tinker, Tailor Soldier, Spy.

The National Railway Museum

The National Railway Museum is home to a wide range of railway icons and millions of artefacts, from the only Shinkansen Bullet train to be displayed outside Japan, to a lock of Robert Stephenson's hair, to the Flying Scotsman. The Museum's archives include 1.4 million photographs, 15,000 books and 7,000 historic posters. Whether you're interested in the social history of the railways, the design of the Eurostar, the Japanese bullet train or Thomas the Tank Engine, you will find it here. Entrance to the museum is free for everyone.

York Castle Museum

York Castle Museum is famous for its collections of costumes, military and social history, with over 100,000 items to show. The collection of this museum was the brainchild of John Kirk, a country doctor and antiquarian, who between 1890 and 1920 rescued a variety of everyday items he realised were part of a vanishing way of life. In 1935, his collection was donated to the City of York. Everything you see is real; no item is replicated or fabricated. Many exhibits are displayed in a reconstructed Victorian 'street' where you can wander in and out of workshops, where saddlers, weavers and candle-makers plied their trade. The museum also contains a series of period rooms that reveal domestic interiors from various times, Jacobean, Georgian and Victorian. The Museum's newest exhibition unlocked the infamous cells of the former prison building, unleashing the powerful, moving and sometimes gruesome tales of those that were once imprisoned there.

River Cruises

York owes its existence to rivers Ouse and Foss. The island they created made York an ideal defensive site and the River Ouse has remained an important trading highway. Now the rivers are no longer for defence and trade has dwindled away, but much pleasure can still be had sightseeing. Guided River Trips that last approximately one hour and sail regularly throughout the day, from 10.30am, from city centre landings at King's Staith and Lendal Bridge. Boats have open sun-decks and comfortable lounges with panoramic windows to ensure a good view of the riverside landmarks in the city and countryside. The captain will tell the stories of York past and present. There is also a bar on board for those who would like to enjoy a cup of tea – or something a little stronger. Tickets are available on boarding the boat at King's Staith or Lendal Bridge Landing.

The York Dungeon

A scary adventure through York's darker past – certainly not for the faint hearted. Man's inhumanity to his fellow men over the last 2,000 years is illustrated in a succession of grisly tableaux. The visitor is taken on a spine-tingling tour around plague ravaged streets of 14th century York, meets the ghostly roman legionnaires who march silently through the wall of a cellar and follows Dick Turpin on his way to the gallows.

York City Art Gallery

Occupying one side of Exhibition Square is the city's premier gallery, housing more than 600 paintings – from lustrous Italian altarpieces to the northern millscapes of Lowry. There are also a number of works by York born William Etty, whose statue stands outside. The museum runs temporary programmes next to its permanent exhibition. Entrance is free to everyone.

The World Tour of York

This entertaining tour not only covers the development of the city through its 2000 years of existence, it also enables the visitor to understand the York of the 21st century. Lasting approximately two hours, you can experience the incredible variety of history, heritage, culture, shopping, eating & drinking and entertainment that York has to offer. It enables the visitor to carefully plan the rest of their stay in the city and thereby enhance their experience. Tours leave St Helens Square at 11am and 2pm every Saturday. **ADVANCE BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.**

Evening York

Ghost walks, moonlit river cruises and pub trails all give endless possibilities for a fun-packed evening in this vibrant city. Indulge in drama, dance, pantomime, comedy, debate and youth theatre at York Theatre Royal which has been at the heart of York's cultural offering for centuries or get the West End experience for less at York's Grand Opera House – hosting many travelling big stage productions throughout year and offering variety for everyone. The newly re-opened York Barbican is putting York back on the map for live music, or if you prefer something more classical and intimate the National Centre for Early Music hosts a real variety of concerts throughout the year.

Ghost Walks

York has more ghosts than any other European city and lots of gory stories to go with them. Every night of the week there are guided walks around the city in search of the supernatural and the unexplained. One of the many York pubs said to be haunted – and one of the oldest – is the Black Swan in Peasholme Green. Various ghost tours start at 7.30pm/8.00pm, no need to book in advance.

The Shambles

The Shambles is one of the best-preserved medieval shopping streets in Europe. Although none of the original shop-fronts have survived from medieval times, some properties still have exterior wooden shelves, reminders of when cuts of meat were served from the open windows. The street was made narrow by design to keep the meat out of direct sunlight. But you can readily imagine The Shambles thronged with people and awash with offal and discarded bones. The outbreaks of the plague that periodically erupted in the city may be blamed on such unsanitary practices. It is easy to picture the noisy, chaotic jumble the street once was. Today the beautiful old buildings have been restored and now house cheerful cafes and quirky boutiques.

Out of Town

Castle Howard

Castle Howard is a spectacular eighteenth-century palace, which has been home to the Howard family for 300 years. The construction of this magnificent palace took more than 100 years and spanned the lifetime of three Earls and numerous architects and craftsmen. As the house was built and decorated, the grounds were filled with lakes, temples, monuments and a grand mausoleum. Indoors, furniture, paintings, sculptures and a host of other treasures were assembled by successive generations after their tours of the Continent. Castle Howard is today still home to the Howard family.

Yorkshire Air Museum

This fascinating museum is authentically based on a World War Two Bomber Command Station. The unique displays include the original Control Tower, Air Gunners' Collection, Barnes Wallis' 'bouncing bomb' and a superb new Airborne Forces Display. The expanding collection of historical aircraft depicts aviation from its earliest days through to the World War Two. Items on display also include uniforms, logbooks, photographs and many other rare artefacts from WWI & WWII.

There are numerous attractions surrounding the city of York for the visitor to explore, including Beningbrough Hall & Gardens, Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal Estate, Harewood House (near Leeds), North Yorkshire Moors Railway (Pickering), The Royal Armouries (Leeds), and the World of James Herriot (Thirsk). **For more information on these attractions please contact:** Kay Hyde PR Manager – Visit York Tel 01904 554451, Fax 01904 554460, email kh@visityork.org website www.visityork.org

Shopping

For shopaholics, the York Designer Outlet on the outskirts of the city will provide an ideal opportunity to bag some bargain designer clothes. In the city centre itself you will find shops with character, with everything from high street stores to unusual boutiques, cafes and restaurants and a plethora of antiques shops.

York Designer Outlet

Those who would like to pick up a designer bargain should pay a visit to the York Designer Outlet. The outlet, which is known as the “designer destination of the north” – has a wealth of quality labels and top names, all under the one roof. It has over 120 stores including Gap Outlet, Marks & Spencer Outlet, Coast, Karen Millen, Armani Collections, Paul Smith, Reebok, Calvin Klein Jeans, Burberry, and The Professional Cookware Company. With wide selection of food outlets and cafes, an award winning safety- approved children’s play area and over 2,700 free car parking spaces and various activities and events taking place, the outlet is a perfect location for a family day out.

York has over **30 museums, galleries and tours** to choose from, contact us for further details. The Yorkshire Dales and North Yorkshire Moors national parks are right on York’s doorstep, making the city an excellent touring base for Yorkshire. For our out of town fact sheet visit www.visityork.org/media

For any further information and your free guide to York, please contact: York Visitor Information Centre, Tel: 01904 550099, email: info@visityork.org or visit the website at www.visityork.org. **Press contact:** Kay Hyde, PR Manager Visit York, Tel: 01904 554451, email: kh@visityork.org, website: www.visityork.org.