



AN INTRODUCTION TO YORK

"I was born in York and grew up there, so I have a great fondness for this remarkable city with its winding, cobbled streets and beautiful architecture. I have happy memories of my days at the Mount School and my first appearance in the Mystery Plays. The city has evolved over the years, with the arrival of new and exciting attractions, a wealth of interesting shops and a vibrant café and evening culture. However, some things never change and, no matter how long I am away, that first glimpse of the magnificent Minster towering above the city will never cease to inspire and move me. I will always be proud to call York my home." Dame Judi Dench

York is one of England's finest and most beautiful historic cities. The Romans knew it as Eboracum. To the Saxons it was Eoforwick. The Vikings – who came as invaders but stayed on in settlements – called it Jorvik. Its more recent history also characterises the city – its Minster and medieval architecture, its Georgian town houses, and its wonderful Victorian railway station. The York of today is a fashionable city that successfully combines its heritage and superb historic architecture with sophisticated designer shops, smart restaurants, bars and cafés, to attract tourists from all over the world. Visitors soon discover that every aspect of York's modern life is inextricably linked with its past. Even their evening entertainment includes ghost walks through the city's shadowy snickelways and ginnels to find haunted pubs – of which York boasts a great many.

The History Lover's Adventure begins within the ancient, encircling walls on York's medieval streets, where buildings are beautifully preserved and the historic heart of the city is largely traffic-free, making it quiet, clean and very pleasant to stroll around, day and night. Stonegate and Petergate, York's two most stylish shopping streets, still run along the same routes as they did 2,000 years ago, when they were called Via Praetoria and Via Principalis and led to the massive Roman headquarters which once occupied the site where the vast gothic Minster stands today, dominating the city. This magnificent building took 250 years to build and was consecrated in 1472. It contains England's greatest concentration of medieval stained glass, including the Great East Window which, measuring 186 square metres, is thought to be the largest area of stained glass in the world.



The city is recognised all over the world as an archaeological treasure trove. JORVIK, now a state-of-the-art visitor attraction perfect for a **Culture Vulture Adventure**, is one of the best-known sites in the city, and since the archaeological dig began here in 1976 it has captured and sustained the public imagination. Over 15,000 objects were recovered in the process of uncovering a Viking village complete with workshops, rubbish pits, latrines and wells. The most spectacular find was an exquisitely-preserved Anglo-Saxon helmet, now on view in the Castle Museum.

There is nothing more evocative of York's medieval era than the narrow streets and snickelways. Go on a **History Lover's Adventure** through York where these ginnels wind haphazardly through the pedestrianised city centre. These days, they are home to fashionable boutiques and cafés, with unforgettable names such as Coffee Yard, Swinegate, Grape Lane (formerly Grope Lane), Mad Alice Lane and – most famous of all – the Shambles: This former street of butchers' shops has survived as one of the most complete medieval streets in Europe, and remains in such remarkable condition that you can still see the wide windowsills on which goods were displayed for sale and even the hooks upon which cuts of meat were hung.

The Merchant Adventurers' Hall, the Guildhall (finest medieval example of its kind in Europe), and the Minster itself are all enduring examples of extraordinary medieval endeavour, and a relatively recent discovery was Barley Hall – a timber-framed hall house dating from the Wars of the Roses, tucked away in the snickelways off Stonegate. It had been hidden away for centuries behind brick buildings, but was found to be well preserved, and has now been restored and furnished in full colourful medieval style and is open to the public. We even know that Alderman William Snawsell, goldsmith and Lord Mayor of York resided here at the end of the 15th century.



In the 18th century York was regarded by the monied classes as an attractive and elegant alternative to London and the city's many remaining Georgian town houses and buildings are a precious reminder of its most elegant manifestation. The Assembly Rooms, now an imposing restaurant, were designed by Richard, Earl of Burlington, in 1731, and were some of the earliest neo-classical buildings in Europe, and the Red House near the Minster, now Red House Antiques is home to an impressive collection of Georgian, Victorian and art deco artefacts. But perhaps nowhere sums up Georgian York as well as Fairfax House, one of the most distinguished 18th century townhouses in Britain and now the ideal backdrop to the Noel Terry (of the famous confectionery firm) Collection of Furniture, where you can go on a quest to find the missing jewels on a **History Lover's Adventure**.

York's first railway station was built in 1839, and the present magnificent edifice dates from 1877. When opened it was the largest station of its type in Europe. The city is therefore a natural setting for the National Railway Museum. Close to half a million visitors visit each year, enjoying over 100 engines, interactive displays and lavish exhibitions.



The **Foodie Adventurer** cannot fail to appreciate the role of York in the chocolate world, in part due to the sizable factories created by Rowntree's and Terry's during the 20th century. York is home to some big names in the chocolate aisle, Rowntree's created Kit Kat, Smarties and Aero, whilst Terry's created the Chocolate Orange and their rich dark All Gold collection. The history and evolution of these chocolates, that we still enjoy today, is intertwined with York's social history and industrial development

with as much to be celebrated as the artwork, buildings, fashion, railways and the Vikings for which the city is already famed for.

With centuries of blood-spill, gore and gruesomeness in the city's 2000 year history, discover the tales of York's supernatural sightings and scare yourself silly with a Ghost Tour in Europe's most haunted city on a **Thrill-Seeker's Adventure**.

The Thrill-Seeker's Adventure would also have to include a trip to the Races. Summer brings the racing season to York from May to October. York Races lend a frivolous, excited air to the city as everyone heads for the Knavesmire to cheer on their hot tip. As is the tradition with Britain's big racing events, many people are more interested in the fashion than the horses, as the races provide the perfect excuse to dress up and don lavish and extraordinary hats for a day.



Besides the racing, York has events all year round, including the Jorvik Viking Festival in February, the Early Music Festival in July (York is the location of the National Centre for Early Music), the Great Yorkshire Fringe in July, the Food and Drink Festival in September and many other festivals and events.

For more information and to book your stay in York:

Visit www.visitYork.org/adventure

Press contact: Kay Hyde, Head of PR & Communications.

Tel: 01904 554451 Email: Kay.Hyde@makeityork.com