Introduction

The communications team at Visit York have put together this press pack to provide inspiration for journalists, travel writers and influencers who are looking for fresh ideas and reasons to visit and write about York. You may already know that over 20 visitor attractions in York are located within the historic city walls including the world-famous JORVIK Viking Centre, the iconic York Minster and the largest Railway Museum in the UK. On top of that, the heritage city offers an exciting programme of annual events and festivals and superb independent shopping opportunities.

York is a well-known historical gem, with the history of the city spanning over 2000 years from its establishment by Romans, to then being invaded by the Vikings, as well as its position as the Capital of the North. York also has an extensive chocolate history with Terrys and Rowntree beginning their sweet journeys here with Chocolate Orange and Kit Kat. It is a small city with so much packed in, much of which has already been written about, but with a huge amount more remaining to be discovered. We hope this pack will help you inspire your readers and viewers to choose York for their next adventure.

In 2020 York will host the first ever York Festival with headline acts including Lionel Richie and The Madness. The BAFTA acclaimed Aesthetica Short Film Festival will celebrate its 10th anniversary with the most expansive programme to date. Festival of art – York Mediale will return to the city for the second time to showcase why York is UK’s first and only UNESCO City of Media Arts, while Bloom! will bring gardens and flowers to the city centre in summer.

We hope you will be inspired to visit York and that you have a wonderful stay in the city. We’d be delighted to assist you with your accommodation arrangements and provide you with York Passes for you to explore the city’s attractions.

We look forward to welcoming you soon!

With best wishes,

Amy, Ana and Katie in the Visit York communications team.
comms@makeityork.com
News-openings, developments, new events & exhibitions

A modern cosmopolitan city with deep historic roots, York is not static and every year brings new openings and developments. See below information for all of York’s additions in 2020—from new and returning events, to new exhibitions and archaeological discoveries.
DIG OF EBORACUM
Major City Centre development plans launched—including a new world-class Roman attraction. York-based developers, North Star, in partnership with York Archaeological Trust are planning on developing a major area of York city centre that was once the site of a major Roman Road nearly two thousand years ago. The development will be called The Roman Quarter and includes plans for a new Roman-themed tourist attraction. The once-in-a-generation dig itself will have significant public benefit, creating excitement and engagement amongst York residents and visitors alike, as the layers of history are peeled back, and the public will be invited to share in the excitement as items are unearthed.

NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK
CLEVELAND IRONSTONE MINING MUSEUM EXPANSION
The museum is undergoing a £1.7 million expansion project expected to open in 2020. A new extension will house an extended museum and exhibition space able to accommodate temporary exhibitions, arts displays and live performances, an archive housing and viewing rooms for public access to the Museum’s collections, an expanded Education space to better support large school groups and an extensive model of the Zig-Zag Railway which once climbed the valley side, transporting goods to and from Skinningrove. The museum expects to re-open in 2020 although a pop up museum is functioning in the interim.

HARLAND MILLER: YORK, SO GOOD THEY NAMED IT ONCE AT YORK ART GALLERY
14 FEB-31 MAY 2020
York Art Gallery presents Harland Miller’s (b. York, 1964) largest solo exhibition to date. Featuring both new and existing works, the show includes perhaps Miller’s best-known series; the ‘Penguin Book Covers’ and the ‘Pelican Bad Weather Paintings’. These works directly refer to the artist’s relationship to York, the city in which he grew up, as well as making wider references to the culture and geography of Yorkshire as a whole. In addition to these dust jacket paintings, the artist shows works from his recent ‘Letter Painting’ series; canvases made up of overlaid letters to form short words or acronyms in a format inspired by the illuminated letters of medieval manuscripts.

YORK RESTAURANT WEEK
2-9 MARCH 2020
In 2019 the York BID launched and ran the first ever York Restaurant Week. A celebration of York’s vibrant food and drinks scene, the event saw 41 restaurants and cafés take part, offering special set menus at £10, £15 and £20. The week proved to be a huge success and will be returning for the second year in 2020.

IN THE MOMENT: THE ART OF WELLBEING AT BENINGBROUGH HALL, GALLERY AND GARDENS
3 MARCH-1 NOV 2020 (ON OPEN DAYS)
The new exhibition will arrive to the Saloon Galleries at Beningbrough Hall, Gallery and Gardens. Based on the ‘five ways to wellbeing’ (connect, take notice, be active, give, keep learning), visitors will discover how looking at art can help them to relax and disconnect from life’s daily worries. Featuring works by L.S. Lowry, Tracey Emin, Marc Chagall, Bridget Riley and Jacques Nimki, among others, the exhibition is created in partnership with the Arts Council Collection.
A TALE OF TWO CITIES: EXPLORING THE SECRET HISTORY OF YORK AT YORK MANSION HOUSE JUN-SEPT 2020
The contrast between enormous wealth and desperate poverty, is a conversation as relevant now as it has ever been. For hundreds of years, York has represented this disparity with entertaining royalty, decadent feasts and sparkling silver, to the ‘slums’ that blighted the city landscape. Now, a new partnership with York Mansion House and Explore York Libraries and Archives will delve into the incredible city archives to examine how these two worlds existed in parallel, and the people who worked to transform the lives of York’s less fortunate citizens.

GRAYSON PERRY: THE PRE-THERAPY YEARS AT YORK ART GALLERY 12 JUNE-20 SEP 2020
A major new exhibition featuring the earliest works and “lost pots” of one of Britain’s most well-known artists is coming to York next summer. The touring exhibition, developed by the Holburne Museum in Bath, is the first to celebrate Grayson Perry’s earliest forays into the art world and will re-introduce the explosive and creative works he made between 1982 and 1994. The remarkable 70 works included in the exhibition have been crowd-sourced following a national public appeal. These ‘lost’ pots will be on display together for the first time since they were made.

YORK FESTIVAL 19-21 JUNE 2020
Global icon Lionel Richie, pop superstars Westlife and British music legends Madness will headline the first ever York Festival. The three-day music festival will be held at York Sports Club between Friday June 19th and Sunday June 21st 2020. Opening night headliners Madness, who have chalked up no fewer than 15 UK Top 10 singles and seven Top 10 albums, will be joined by indie chart-toppers Lightning Seeds, Craig Charles with his famous Funk and Soul Club DJ set together with Leeds indie rockers Apollo Junction and York’s very own Violet Contours. Westlife headline on the Saturday night as part of their UK-wide Stadiums in the Summer Tour. Joining Westlife on the night will be superstar pop group All Saints, Brit singer-songwriter Sophie Ellis Bextor, indie rock band Scouting for Girls and Take That’s Howard Donald, who will be spinning the discs for a very special DJ set. Sunday night headliner is none other than international superstar Lionel Richie. The four-time Grammy Award-winner will perform a hit-packed concert that covers his extensive and much-loved repertoire from his hit-making days with the Commodores right up to the present day.

BLOOM! FLOWER & PRODUCE SHOW: 20-28 JUNE 2020
York’s festival of flowers & horticulture is returning in June 2020 and is looking for organisations to get involved in our second city-wide celebration of colour in nature. The Festival’s theme of ‘Art in Nature’ encompasses gardening and garden design as well as visual arts, music and performing arts. As with the inaugural festival in 2018, Bloom! will include a number of large installation projects across the city. The festival programme will feature a series of fringe events, organised and hosted by different businesses across the city as well as the highly engaging Bloom! Window Dressing Competition, in 2018 judged by a renowned celebrity florist Simon Lycett.

THE BRIDESHEAD FESTIVAL: 75 YEARS OF PRINT AND SCREEN AT CASTLE HOWARD 26-28 JUNE 2020
As Evelyn Waugh’s seminal novel turns 75, visitors are invited to magnificent
Castle Howard, for a celebration of this masterpiece of 20th century fiction and screen. Waugh’s novel, an unforgettable exploration of youth, nostalgia, religion and class, set among the spires of Oxford and the immaculate lawns of one of England’s great country houses, is a classic of English literature. Granada’s sumptuous 11 part adaptation takes its place among the greatest moments of TV history, shaped the fashion of the 1980’s, and transformed its stars—among them Jeremy Irons—into icons. Featuring a stellar line up of writers, biographers, leading actors and crew, and including screenings, discussion panels, performances and exclusive tours, The Brideshead Festival will explore the ‘magic power’ and enduring nature of Brideshead Revisited. What makes the book a classic? Why have its adaptations captured the hearts, and imaginations of generations of viewers? Whatever happened to Aloysius? Join for a decadent weekend in the stunning setting which inspired writer and filmmakers alike.

WOOD LIFE FESTIVAL AT NORTH YORK MOORS AND YORKSHIRE DALES
24 JULY-1 SEPTEMBER 2020
The festival will focus on two National Park Centres, with events and exhibitions exploring the relationship between trees, woodland and humans at a time of climate crisis.

WOOD LIFE EXHIBITION
24 JULY-1 SEPTEMBER 2020
Inspired by... gallery, themed around climate change and ancient trees, featuring 3D installations. Wood Life Festival-A celebration of Woodland, Ancient Trees and Tree Communities (25 - 26 July) will head to The Moors National Park Centre for a weekend family adventure of wood-themed activities from chainsaw sculpture and woodturning, to archery, living history and art demos (willow weaving, charcoal making and watercolour).

AS PART OF THIS FESTIVAL, THE LOST WORDS: TOLD IN GOLD WILL TAKE HOST IN THE GROUNDS OF THE MOORS NATIONAL PARK CENTRE
24 - 27 JULY 2020
The Lost Words: Told in Gold is an outdoor immersive theatre performance for all ages led by a charm of Britain’s wild birds. The play is an adaptation of the multi award winning book by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris that has charmed the UK. Known in its first year as Seek, Find, Speak - this seedling production supported by Arts Council England - has now taken root and is thriving under its new name - Told in Gold. This season brings with it the glorious music from the recently released album ‘Spellsongs’ and features a huge goldfinch nest theatre, stunning projections and installations of Morris’s golden illustrations and Macfarlane’s words. With sound recordings of the spell poems from some of Britain’s famous voices of all ages and accents, audiences will join the cast, fly with the charm of goldfinches setting the world alight with gold and glitter.

FAMOUS PORTRAIT OF KING RICHARD III TO GO ON DISPLAY AT THE YORKSHIRE MUSEUM
SUMMER 2020
The world-famous late 16th century portrait of Richard III will go on display at the Yorkshire Museum as part of a new exhibition, in summer 2020. The painting, which has become synonymous with the depiction of Richard III, is on loan from the National Portrait Gallery, London, and will be displayed alongside the museum’s outstanding collections associated with the King such as the magnificent Middleham Jewel, The Ryther Hoard and the Stillingfleet Boar Badge worn by one of his supporters. The loan to the Yorkshire Museum is part of the National Portrait Gallery’s nation-wide COMING HOME project, that will see some of its most iconic works travel to the place they are most closely associated with.
WORLD JAM FESTIVAL AT HELMSLEY WALLED GARDEN AND VENUES AROUND HELMSLEY  
11-13 SEPTEMBER 2020
A new event, modelled on the successful ‘World’s Original Marmalade Awards’ in Cumbria. A jam packed weekend celebrating all things jam combining Alice in Wonderland characters edged with Steam Punk, and raising funds for local charities. Expect a competition with eight categories of jam, such as tipsy, farmhouse, home grown, granny’s recipe, and a category for under 16’s and jam-themed food, including a new local ice-cream flavour. The celebrations across the weekend will include Helmsley Arts Centre performances around the town and tea parties, with more to be confirmed.

THE INTERNATIONAL SHEEP DOG SOCIETY WORLD TRIALS AT CASTLE HOWARD  
17-20 SEPTEMBER 2020
Castle Howard are delighted to be hosting the International Sheep Dog Society World Trials in September 2020. The World Sheep Dog Trials take place once every three years, over four days in a different country each time. The first two days of the event are qualifying days, day three is the semi-finals and the finals take place on day four. Castle Howard held the English National Sheep Dog Trials back in 2016 and are delighted to now be hosting the World trials next year.

YORK MEDIALE  
21-25 OCTOBER 2020
The countdown has begun to the second biennial York Mediale, the UK’s leading celebration of digital and media arts. Artists from across the globe gather in the historic city of York to present extraordinary exhibitions, world-premiere performances and new technology; a city-wide celebration of York as the UK’s first and only UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts. Ambitions for the festival are high, with the inaugural Mediavle presenting 113 artists including Suzanne Ciani, Matthew Plummer-Fernandez, Moses Boyd and Deep Lab. Headline events for 2020 are set to be announced in the spring, with the full programme released in early summer.
Anniversaries

At York we love an anniversary and 2020 brings plenty. See below what great events are celebrating their anniversaries in 2020 and what additions they will be bringing to make the date even more significant.
10 YEARS OF AESTHETICA SHORT FILM FESTIVAL
The Aesthetica Film Festival is a hotbed for ideas and talent discovery. It’s a destination to experience the power and craft of cinema. This BAFTA qualifying festival celebrates the best in independent cinema from across the world, with over 400 films and 100 events, with Oscar- and Emmy-winning directors and producers. ASFF leaves a lasting legacy with both filmmakers and festival-goers. Previous industry speakers have included Dick Pope, Rankin, Tracy Granger, Alice Lowe, Simon Chinn and Chris Wyatt as well as representatives from leading organisations such as Aardman, Industrial Light & Magic, Film4, BBC, British Vogue, Sky, Baby Cow and many more. In 2020 (4-8 November), ASFF celebrates its 10th anniversary, with its most expansive programme to date.

125 YEARS OF NATIONAL TRUST
2020 marks the anniversary of the National Trust’s creation. In 1895, Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley pledged to preserve the nation’s historical and natural places. Their aim was not only to save important sites, but to open them up for everyone to enjoy. From this trio of environmental pioneers, the National Trust was created – and their original values have remained at the heart of everything the charity does today, 125 years later. Throughout 2020 National Trust places across Yorkshire will be the perfect backdrop for exploration and a day out. Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, Beningbrough Hall, Gallery and Gardens, and Nunnington Hall are all hosting exciting programmes of events, art and cultural activities.

90 YEARS OF FRANK GREEN AT TREASURER’S HOUSE YORK
90 years ago, in 1930, Frank Green a wealthy Yorkshire collector, gave his home and collection to the National Trust on his retirement. Treasurer’s House as we see today is Frank Green’s creation of a series of period room for his fine collection of art and furniture and was the first to be given to the charity complete with its contents. He was so set on his vision, he placed studs where he wanted pieces to stand and even threatened to haunt the house should things be moved. The history of the site dates back much further and as the name implies the area was the location of the mansion of the medieval Treasurers of York Minster but nothing of that building survives. Mr. Green believed in saving property at a time when many historic houses were lost and part of his gift to the National Trust included several other buildings in York including the area that homes the large National Trust shop on Goodramgate.

250 YEARS OF HOLGATE WINDMILL
2020 is a momentous year at Holgate Windmill as the mill is celebrating the 250th anniversary of its construction by miller George Waud in 1770. The mill was owned by the Waud family until 1851 and then passed through various hands until it was bought by the Gutch family. In 1939 the Gutchs sold the mill to York Corporation. It stopped milling in 1933 and remained silent until the Holgate Windmill Preservation Society, after ten years of restoration to working order, opened it in 2012. The HWPS is planning a year-long series of events to mark the anniversary. In addition to the usual open weekends twice a month from May to October, the historical costume weekend will also be staged as part of National Mills Week. In addition there will be craft days, an art show and an exhibition charting the history of the mill.

10 YEARS OF YORK FESTIVAL OF IDEAS
Celebrating ten years, York Festival of Ideas will explore ‘Infinite Horizons’ through a packed programme of inspiring events for all ages and interests during summer 2020. One of the largest free festivals in the UK, the award-winning Festival of Ideas has become a key fixture in the city of York’s cultural calendar. Running from 2 to 14 June 2020 under the banner of Infinite Horizons, the Festival will offer over 150 free events, including talks from world-class speakers, exhibitions, theatre, music, films, guided walks, family-friendly activities and workshops. This year’s headline speakers and exciting range of events will be announced in spring 2020. York Festival of Ideas is co-ordinated by the University of York and is a collaboration involving more than 100 local and national partners. Now in its tenth year, the Festival is built on a belief in the power of ideas and education to transform lives, and therefore promotes an accessible programme of events which aim to educate, entertain and inspire.

75 YEARS OF BRIDESHEAD REVISITED
As Evelyn Waugh’s seminal novel turns 75, visitors are invited to magnificent Castle Howard, for a celebration of this masterpiece of 20th century fiction and screen. The 1984 ITV series ‘Brideshead Revisited’ as well as the 2008 movie of the same name and story were both filmed at Castle Howard and many of the iconic film backdrops can be found on the vast stately home grounds. Waugh’s novel, an unforgettable exploration of youth, nostalgia, religion and class, set among the spires of Oxford and the immaculate lawns of one of England’s great country houses, is a classic of English literature. Granada’s sumptuous 11 part adaptation takes its place among the greatest moments of TV history, shaped the fashion of the 1980’s, and transformed its stars-among them Jeremy Irons-into icons.

5 YEARS OF THE DARK SKIES FESTIVAL
February sees the fifth Dark Skies Festival, run jointly by the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. Building on the success of the 2019 festival, the 2020 Festival theme will be exploration and new discoveries. Expect some 100 events lined up and discover the thrills, fun and nocturnal wildlife wonders that come with getting outside after dark, as well as simply marvelling the beauty of the National Parks’ pristine night skies in the company of astronomers.

390 YEARS OF MOTHER SHIPTON’S CAVE
Mother Shipton’s was opened in 1630 and is the oldest known paid tourist attraction in England. In 2020, the attractions celebrates its 390th Birthday. People have been visiting to see the Petrifying Well for centuries. This ancient well – formerly known as the Dropping Well – is believed to be the only one of its kind in England and it first went on public display in 1630 when the Slingsby family owned the land. Sir Charles Slingsby realised the significance of the well and began to charge for guided tours. Since then millions of visitors from all over the world have been Enchanted by the park’s natural beauty, mesmerised by the Petrifying Well and enthralled by Mother Shipton’s birthplace and her amazing story.

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Events-calendar

Every year in York is full of amazing events and festivals, from the biggest Ice Trail in the country to the inspiring York Festival of Ideas that will also celebrate its 10 years anniversary in 2020. Have a look below at our events calendar and get in touch if you would like to visit one of them.
YORK RESIDENTS’ FESTIVAL
25-26 JANUARY
York Residents’ Festival is a chance for local people to explore the city and be a tourist for the weekend-for free! Organised by Visit York in partnership with the City of York Council, this annual Festival is the city’s way of saying a huge ‘thank you’ for the warm welcome the residents of York give to York’s 7 million visitors. This year the festival celebrates its’ 25th anniversary.

YORK ICE TRAIL
1-2 FEBRUARY
After the success of previous years, York Ice Trail returns in February for a weekend of ice sculptures and fun family-friendly activities. The event will run for 2 days, with 40 ice sculptures placed around the city on a trail visitors will be able to follow. The 2020 festival theme is ‘Fantastical Fiction and Fairy Tales’.

DARK SKIES FESTIVAL (NORTH YORK MOORS & YORKSHIRE DALES)
16 FEBRUARY-1 MARCH
February sees the fifth Dark Skies Festival themed on exploration and new discoveries with some 100 events lined up. Visitors can discover the thrills, fun and nocturnal wildlife wonders that come with getting outside after dark, as well as simply marvel the beauty of the National Parks’ pristine night skies in the company of astronomers.

36TH ANNUAL JORVIK VIKING FESTIVAL - VOYAGES OF THE VIKINGS
15-23 FEBRUARY
From the freezing North to the heat of Spain; the Vikings travelled far, leaving their mark across the world through trading, raiding and discovery. Just like the Norse in the 9th century, voyage to York this February for the 36th annual JORVIK Viking Festival. Immerse yourself in their legacy, with city-wide events exploring the stories of these great travellers.

YORK RESTAURANT WEEK
2-9 MARCH
First run in 2019, York Restaurant Week is a celebration of York’s vibrant food and drinks scene, offering fantastic savings on some of the city’s best dining experiences. It is the perfect occasion to enjoy some wining and dining with friends and loved ones, support local and independent businesses, and try delicious menus somewhere you haven’t been before.

AESTHETICA ART PRIZE
13 MARCH-7 JUNE
Hosted by Aesthetica Magazine, the Aesthetica Art Prize is a celebration of excellence in art from across the world. It offers both emerging and established artists the opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience, and further their engagement with the international art world, with entries from locations all over the world.

YORK LITERATURE FESTIVAL
19-28 MARCH
Celebrating the written and spoken word in one of the UK’s most beautiful cities, the festival aims to bring the latest in top-quality literary events and artists to York in a ten day period packed with attractions. Besides its usual string of headliners, 2020 will see the return of The Big History Weekend plus a Creative Crime-Writing Conference.

YORK FASHION WEEK
20-27 MARCH
York Fashion Week, organised by Fashion City York, is an initiative made up of local business owners, working to engage with and nurture the fashion community in York. Over the seven days the city will celebrate creative designers, elaborate fashions, thriving high street brands and exciting independent brands and businesses.

YORK CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL
10-14 APRIL
This Easter themed weekend will give visitors a delicious chocolatey experience in preparation for the main Food and Drink Festival taking place in autumn. Sample all kinds of chocolates from hazelnut to wasabi, learn the art of chocolate making or get a unique souvenir for your friends and family from the home of chocolate.
YORK OPEN STUDIOS  
18-19 & 25-26 APRIL  
Open over two weekends in the spring, York Open Studios celebrate and encourage participation in the visual arts. The event offers the chance to visit artists and makers in their own studios and workshops, discover their passions and inspiration, share their knowledge and support their engagement with the local community.

FISH & SHIPS FESTIVAL (WHITBY)  
16-17 MAY  
Whitby is one of the few places left in Britain where you can still experience the seafarer’s way of life from sea to shore, as it has been for hundreds of years. The Fish & Ships Festival will let visitors explore everything that’s special about the Yorkshire Coast’s magnificent maritime culture, from the building of its boats to its multi award-winning fish restaurants.

EBORACUM ROMAN FESTIVAL  
29-31 MAY  
Annual Eboracum Roman Festival comes to life in the beautiful York Museum Gardens with a Roman Living History camp, Kids Army, demonstrations, lectures and activities for all ages. The highlight of the festival is the Roman Parade where a Roman Emperor leads six Roman Legions and civilians through the ancient streets of Eboracum (York).

YORK FESTIVAL OF IDEAS  
2-14 JUNE  
One of the largest free festivals in the UK, the award-winning Festival has become a key fixture in York’s cultural calendar. Running under the banner of Infinite Horizons, the Festival will offer over 150 free events, including talks from world-class speakers, exhibitions, theatre, music, films, guided walks, family-friendly activities and workshops.

FOOD & DRINK TASTER FESTIVAL  
6-7 JUNE  
Before the big event, the York Taster Festival will take place from 6-7 June 2020. An assortment of cuisines from Jamaican to Thai, Greek to Indian, will be available to sample during the York Taster Festival-better known as the little sister of the York Food and Drink Festival. Taster might be small, but is still filled with a myriad of different flavours to try.

YORK FESTIVAL  
19-21 JUNE  
Global icon Lionel Richie, pop superstars Westlife and British music legends Madness will headline the first ever York Festival. The three-day music festival will be held at York Sports Club between Friday June 19 and Sunday June 21 2020 and will feature international as well as local artists for residents and visitors to enjoy listening to over the weekend.

BLOOM! FLOWER & PRODUCE SHOW  
20-28 JUNE  
York’s festival of flowers & horticulture is returning in June 2020 under the theme of ‘Art in Nature’ encompassing gardening and garden design as well as visual arts, music and performing arts. Highlights for 2020 will include a sculpture trail, floral installations and a programme of fringe events across the city.

BRIDESHEAD FESTIVAL (CASTLE HOWARD)  
26-28 JUNE  
Celebrating 75 Years of Brideshead Revisited in print and on screen. Castle Howard is iconic as the TV and Film setting and has many other literary connections. A weekend festival will include a series of talks, events and fringe activity all dedicated to Evelyn Waugh’s novel and the subsequent screen adaptations.

YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL  
3-11 JULY  
The UK’s largest festival of classical music written before 1750 intertwines the themes of Method & Madness. Guest artists include countertenor Iestyn Davies and the Dunedin Consort directed by John Butt; the Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments; The Sixteen directed by Harry Christophers; Voces Suaves; the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists presenting Handel’s Orlando and more.
WOOD LIFE FESTIVAL (NORTH YORK MOORS) 25-26 JULY
A celebration of Woodland, Ancient Trees and Tree Communities head to The Moors National Park Centre for a weekend family adventure of wood-themed activities from chainsaw sculpture and woodturning, to archery, living history and art demos. The festival will also offer a chill out zone, children’s corner, storytelling, trails and activities.

BBC COUNTRYFILE LIVE NORTH (CASTLE HOWARD) 6-9 AUGUST
BBC Countryfile Live North is returning for its second year back at Castle Howard and will see the return of the Farmyard, the Wildlife Zone, the Countryfile Kitchen, The Craven Arms pub, the Village Green, the Dog Lover’s Arena and of course the Countryfile presenters themselves, appearing on the Main Stage and at various features throughout.

YORK WALLS FESTIVAL 15-16 AUGUST
York’s city walls are the longest medieval walls in England, with a history spanning over 2,000 years. They’ve played a key role in the defence of the city across the centuries and now are a popular visitor attraction, giving visitors the opportunity to discover the history of York from above. York Walls Festival was created in 2018 to help visitors explore the 3.4 kilometres of medieval defences.

WHITBY REGATTA (WHITBY) 15-17 AUGUST
Visitors can enjoy a full weekend of entertainment, embracing yacht racing, rowing races and various free forms of entertainment, finishing with a prize presentation and spectacular firework display. Running for over 170 years - the Whitby Regatta is probably the oldest sea Regatta on the northeast coast and has drawn large crowds into Whitby over the years.

WORLD JAM FESTIVAL (HELMSLEY WALLED GARDEN) 11-13 SEPTEMBER
New event, modelled on the successful The World’s Original Marmalade Awards in Cumbria-the World Jam Festival will celebrate all things jam combining Alice in Wonderland characters edged with Steam Punk, and raising funds for local charities. The celebrations across the weekend will include the jam competition, tea parties, and performances by Helmsley Art Centre.

WORLD SHEEPDOG TRIALS (CASTLE HOWARD) 17-20 SEPTEMBER
Castle Howard are hosting the International Sheep Dog Society World Trails that take place once every three years, over four days in a different country each time. The first two days of the event are qualifying days, day three is the semi-finals and the finals take place on day four. Castle Howard held the English National Sheep Dog Trials back in 2016.

YORK FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL 18-20 SEPTEMBER
York Food & Drink Festival will offer events like wine and food tastings, talks, cookery demonstrations and hands on workshops. At the St. Sampson’s Square visitors and residents will be able to participate in food and cocktail demonstrations, while the Parliament Street will offer the best shopping opportunities for locally produced foods, and some fantastic street food.

YORK BALLOON FIESTA 25-27 SEPTEMBER
The hot air balloon festival is making its way back to York once again, filling the city with colours, live music, children’s entertainment, tribute acts and tasty food. The balloons will fly over the historic city (weather permitting) while an illuminating show will take place on the ground every evening during the weekend-long festival.

YORK MEDIALE 21-25 OCTOBER
The countdown has begun to the second biennial York Mediale, the UK’s leading celebration of digital and media arts in York-the first and only UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts in the UK. Ambitions for the festival are high, with the inaugural Mediale presenting 113 artists including Suzanne Ciani, Matthew Plummer-Fernandez, Moses Boyd and Deep Lab.

GREAT YORK GHOST SEARCH 15 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER
The Great York Ghost Search returns to the UK’s most haunted city. Visitors and locals can wander the spooky streets to find all of this year’s creepy creations, and watch out for any monstrous mini-ghosts hidden all around the city’s snickelways. The ghost lamps, once discovered, will be put on an EBay auction, proceeds from which will go to the Family Holiday Association.

AESTHETICA SHORT FILM FESTIVAL: 4-8 NOVEMBER
The BAFTA-Qualifying Aesthetica Short Film Festival (ASFF) takes place annually across York. ASFF champions outstanding filmmaking talent and expands audience choice by showcasing 300 stunning films from across the world in 15 of the city’s most iconic venues. The films span a diverse range of genres, including animation, artists’ film, comedy, documentary, drama, music video and thriller.

YORK CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 12 NOVEMBER-20 DECEMBER
York becomes a winter wonderland, with everything you need to create magical Christmas moments with friends and family. Visitors can stock up on their Christmas shopping at St Nicholas Fair running for 6 weeks with many local artists and crafters, as well as food and drink producers selling gifts. The city is also illuminated by the beautiful lights all around creating festive atmosphere.

YORK EARLY MUSIC CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 4-12 DECEMBER
Splendid festive music will get visitors and locals in the mood for merriment. Christmas is the perfect time to get transported back in time by an angelic host of musicians, recreating marvellous music of old. The programme of concerts will be released in autumn 2020.

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Story Ideas

With the best racecourse in the country, a thriving cultural scene winning the city UNESCO City of Media Arts status and the titles of Britain’s Home of Chocolate and The Most Haunted City in Europe, York has many faces and an infinite number of stories to tell. We hope that the below story ideas will inspire you to visit our city and share your York experiences with your readers.
Magic York

With a history spanning 2,000 years York is full of myths and magic. Throughout the centuries characters from alchemists to witches are said to have passed through the city. Below is the round-up of magical locations and experiences visitors can sample in York.

Starting from Shambles - city’s most famous street which dates back to the fourteenth century and is said to be an inspiration for the film depiction of Diagon Alley, the magical shopping location from the wizarding world of Harry Potter. The street is now home to different mystical outlets including the World of Wizardy and The Boy Wizard selling everything a wizard fan could possibly need and want and is proving popular with the fans of the magical franchise from around the world.

Shambles is also a host of The Shop That Must Not Be Named - original and premier shop specialising in officially licensed Harry Potter merchandise. There’s magical wares, an amazing selection of wands and friendly wizarding staff, who know everything you could ever want to know about the Boy Who Lived and his world.

Another magical gem is The Potions Cauldron, an old-fashioned apothecary shop, which offers specially-concocted drinks including Serpents Venom Poison, Basilisk Blood and Elixir of Love (the first person to sniff it will fall in love with the nearest wizard). The store also features a 6,000 piece Lego Hogwarts castle and a bubbling cauldron. Visitors can also mix their own magical potions.

The ‘Magic and Mystery’ exhibition at Barley Hall explores the often fine line between science, religion and magic in medieval society. Visitors can find out about those who were outcast as witches and wizards, explore the ‘science’ of magic and alchemy and how such individuals used protective charms and forecasting to foresee the future through prophecies and dreams. Using both archaeological and documentary evidence from the period, Magic and Mystery showcases a thought-provoking and often misinterpreted feature of medieval culture.

Those visitors who prefer to explore on foot, can embark on the Wizard Quest-fun and interactive walking tour for all ages. With potions, magical creatures and an important mission, quest participants will discover magic in the streets of York. Tours run from March - September on Thursday and Friday evenings. Each tour begins at lasts around 45 minutes, starting at King’s Square (at the end of Shambles).

To complete a mystical trip to the city, visitors can stay at the award-winning self-catering accommodation—the Enchantment Chamber. This unique home away from home includes a bed chamber complete with an unconventional four poster bed, realistic open fire, real wood flooring and is furnished with an eclectic collection of magical artefacts from the wizarding world. The apartment is located within the walls of the historical city with ease of access to other magical locations.
Book Lovers York

The saying goes, you can't judge a book by its cover, but a novel way of learning about York is through its rich literary connections. Visitors are invited to explore York—the birthplace of Daniel Defoe's world-famous character Robinson Crusoe.

While walking the over 2000 years old medieval city walls visitors can hear the bells of the iconic York Minster, just as Grace Trewe did in ‘Times Echo’ by Pamela Hartshorne. York Minster's library is also one of the oldest in the country, it includes the York Gospels—over a thousand years old and still used today. Stained-glass windows were also the medieval equivalent of a book, making stories from the Bible accessible for their congregations; York Minster’s Great East Window is the largest expanse of medieval stained glass in the country, a masterpiece in glass and stone depicting the beginning and end of all things.

From York Minster, visitors can take a stroll down Stonegate, one of York's prettiest streets, where the first two volumes of Sterne's landmark ‘Tristram Shandy’ were printed, and look out for the printer's Red Devil which sits on number 33, a former printers, and serves as a lasting reminder of when Stonegate was famous as a centre of books and publishing in the 16th century.

In York visitors can follow in the footsteps of the Henry VIII royal progress to York, and see the sights that remain a reminder of the turbulent history at what is left of St Mary’s Abbey in York Museum Gardens, as depicted in C J Sansom’s historical mystery ‘Sovereign’, the third novel in his ‘Matthew Shardlake Series’. The riverside view of the city that opens up to the eyes of all from the Skeldergate bridge was described in great detail by Wilkie Collins, a friend of Charles Dickens, in his novel ‘No Name’.

In the city that is home of Kit Kat and Chocolate Oranges visitors can immerse themselves in the stories of ‘The Sweethearts, York’s Chocolate Girls’ by Lynn Russell and Neil Hanson by joining the tasty guided tour at York’s Chocolate Story.

Famous English author Kate Atkinson was born in York and many of her characters have a connection to the city. Ruby Lennox from ‘Behind the Scenes at the Museum’ was inspired from one of York’s most visited museums—York Castle Museum, while the fictional detective Jackson Brodie from ‘Started Early, Took My Dog’ was rather fond of Betty’s Tea Rooms, where visitors can still enjoy a traditional English afternoon tea with a side of a delicious fat rascal.

Two major literary events take place in York every year: the National Book Fair (11 - 12 September 2020) and the York Literature Festival (19-28 March 2020) attracting local, national and international crowds.

For many years York has inspired and attracted many authors, including Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf and Bronte sisters, and it continues to do so even now. Matt Haig—a bestselling author of ‘Reasons to Stay Alive’ and ‘Notes on a Nervous Planet’ currently resides in York and many had luck meeting him in person at Waterstones book launches.

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Culture York

York has been the cultural heart of England for over 2000 years. Complete with a year round programme of world-class festivals and events, there is something for every visitor at every corner of York.

The streets surrounding York Minster, King’s Manor and St William’s College are steeped in an unmistakeably intellectual, academic atmosphere. This has been a place of historians, of archaeological and religious study, of choristers, of book publishing, of scholarly endeavour - for hundreds of years. While York’s museums (Yorkshire Museum and York Castle Museum) display the city’s wealth of historical and artistic treasures from Roman times to York’s genteel Georgian days.

At York Art Gallery visitors can enjoy the remarkable collection of important European paintings spanning seven centuries, with works by Bellotto, Reynolds, Lowry, York-born William Etty and in 2020 it will also host the famous portrait of Richard III on loan from the National Portrait Gallery. The Centre of Ceramic Arts (CoCA) located at the gallery is home to a collection of more than 5,000 examples of British Studio Ceramics from throughout the twentieth century right up to the present day.

In York cultural offerings range from medieval music in the Minster to challenging drama, world music and innovative venues and showcases for new artists of all kinds. The packed programmes at the Grand Opera House and York Theatre Royal range from grand opera and classical ballet to Stomp and Soul Explosion. Concerts at the National Centre for Early Music feature folk, jazz, 20th century and world music. York Minster services and concerts, the annual York Early Music Festival and even the many buskers, including the winners of 2019 York Culture Awards-Hyde Family Jam, on York’s streets, all make York a perfect place for music lovers.

Events and festivals reflect the cultural nature of any city and York is no exception. The York Festival of Ideas features a diverse range of talks and discussions on various topics from science and human nature to literature and history. This year’s theme of ‘Infinite Horizons’ celebrates the decade of the festival. Annual BAFTA accredited Aesthetica Short Film Festival (ASFF) also takes place in York attracting local, national and international creators and film-enthusiasts, this year celebrating its 10th anniversary.

Visitors are invited to spend their evening at City Screen York, one of Britain’s Picture House cinemas. As well as screening arthouse, independent and quality mainstream films, The Basement Bar at the cinema hosts diverse music, poetry and comedy events plus a regular film quiz night (Friends, Harry Potter, etc.).

For those interested in modern avant-garde art pieces, Art of Protest Gallery is a place where the cultural production born of this reality break through to everyday conversations outside of the established art arenas. It pushes these conversations beyond the borders of country, religion, class and social media groups, and illuminates the common ground that we all stand on through the prism of visual culture.
Haunted York

York is a city with a dark past, its history is rife with tales of guts, gore, torture and ghosts. The International Ghost Research Foundation even declared York as the most haunted city in Europe due to its blood-stained history and over 500 hauntings within the ancient city walls.

Founded by Romans in 71AD the city’s violent and volatile history—including Viking invasions, the Norman Conquest and the Civil War—makes its sinister legacy easy to understand. Sometimes it seems as though a ghostly figure with a score to settle is in residence in just about every street or ginnel.

The tale goes, in 1953 an apprentice plumber was installing a new central heating system in the cellars of the Treasurer’s House when he suddenly heard a distant sound of a horn soon followed by a great carthorse emerging through the brick wall, ridden by a dishevelled Roman soldier. The ghostly battalion moved into a recently excavated area showing that they were walking on an old Roman road - the Via Decumana - buried 15 inches below the surface. Now all visitors are invited to explore the haunted cellars of the house.

More of an urban legend than a confirmed fact, Mad Alice Lane (now known as Lund’s Court linking Swinegate and Low Petergate) was named after Alice Smith who lived in the lane until 1825. That same year she was hanged at York Castle for the perceived crime of insanity, after murdering her husband for beating her remorselessly numerous times. Some say you can sometimes spot her face in one of the windows looking down over the lane. Now visitors can follow the modern day Mad Alice on The Bloody Tour of York to learn more about the gruesome history of the city.

Almost every historic theatre has a ghost story, and the Georgian York Theatre Royal is no different. It is said that a room behind the dress circle is haunted by the ghost of the Grey Lady - young nun who fell in love with a nobleman, but when soon found out was thrown into a windowless room that was bricked up with no escape. A gruesome tale, but apparently if the nun in her grey habit is spotted in the dress circle, it’s a good omen for that night’s production at the theatre.

It is believed that no less than 15 spirits haunt the unsuspecting Golden Fleece pub. The most notorious of them is the ghost of Lady Anne Peckett—once the wife of the Lord Mayor of York John Peckett.

While the Henry VII experience occupies Micklegate Bar, and Bootham Bar is on many tourists’ photographs of York’s medieval city walls—it wouldn’t have been a popular photo opportunity in mid-14th and 15th centuries. These were the places where heads were impaled on spikes after hanging, drawing and quartering, which was the punishment for traitors and rebels. With the practice beginning in the late 13th century, it was the prime punishment for treason then regarded as the worst and most unnatural of crimes (in Dante’s Divine Comedy, traitors are in the very lowest level of Hell).

November 5th marks the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, a conspiracy to blow up the English Parliament and King James I in 1605. One of the notorious plotters was Guy Fawkes-born and raised in York. Today, the 5th November is known as ‘Firework Night’, ‘Bonfire Night’ or ‘Guy Fawkes Day’ and is still celebrated in England with fireworks and bonfires, on which effigies of the conspirator are burned.
York has connection to many famous historical characters. The city was founded by Romans and for a long time was known as Eboracum. Here is where Septimius Severus—the African-born Roman Emperor died in 211AD. Septimius was an intimate friend of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

Some say he may have even had a part in Commodus’ murder. Years later, in 306AD Constantine the Great—the first Christian Emperor was declared emperor in York, his statue stands near the York Minster.

After the Romans came Anglo-Saxons and the start of the ‘Dark Ages’. The major figure of that period-famous scholar Alcuin was educated in York. 9th century started with Vikings overtaking the rule in York. Eric Bloodaxe, the Viking warrior and the King of York, ruled over Jorvik (Viking name for York) for 14 years until being expelled in 954 and later murdered. He was most certainly representative of the bloodiest characters in York’s bloody history.

Middle Ages saw many famous characters to come out of York. Gunpowder Plotter Guy Fawkes was born and baptised in York. He was baptised at St Michael le Belfrey church in 1570, which still stands there, across the road from York Minster. Later, in 1958, Margaret Clitherow-wife of a Shambles butcher, was crushed to death for harbouring Catholic priests. Today her house is a shrine (located in the Shambles) and Margaret is revered as a martyr. Her hand, which was cut off after her death, is kept in the Bar Convent Museum. The famous dashing highwayman, Dick Turpin, was imprisoned and stayed at the Castle Museum until being hanged at York Racecourse in 1739. And George Hudson, the Railway King was born near York in 1800 and was a Councillor, Alderman, Member of Parliament and Lord Mayor of York.

York’s collection of curious objects demonstrates that little things say a lot. The fascinating facts they reveal speak volumes about the ancient city, which is home to many of the country’s rarest treasures. A tin of cocoa found beside the frozen remains of Captain Scott of the Antarctic’s survived one the world’s most famed and daring expeditions. It is now back in the city it was made in and visitors can see it at York’s Chocolate Story.

Yorkshire Museum is host to many historical objects including the most outstanding object of the Anglo-Saxon period to survive in Europe—The York Helmet. Dated to approximately 750 to 775AD, this iron and brass helmet was discovered when struck by the claw of a mechanical digger—luckily the operator stopped to check what had been hit. Another treasure of the museum is the Middleham jewel and ring—one of the finest pieces of Gothic jewellery found in Britain. It once belonged to the powerful Neville family of the Middleham Castle. A Roman hairpiece from the late 3rd to early 4th century can also be found here.

Another great artefact—The Horn of Ulf can be found in the Undercroft of York Minster. It was once given to the Chapter of York by a Viking nobleman called Ulf as a symbolic deed of trust. The large and ornate ivory horn together with the lands on which the Minster stands today. Another Viking artefact—the only known surviving example of a Viking-age knitted sock is on display at JORVIK Viking Centre, alongside a host of everyday items and relics that provide an unrivalled insight into Viking life.

The National Railway Museum houses the world’s finest collection of royal carriages including Queen Victoria’s last surviving saloon car. Built in 1869 this carriage is lavishly furnished and included luxuries such as an on-board toilet (which she never used).
Tasty York

Yorkshire folk take their food and drink seriously which is probably why Yorkshire now boasts the largest number of Michelin-starred restaurants than any other county in England outside of London. So it’s no surprise that as Yorkshire’s ancient capital, York flies the flag for good food and drink in the region.

One of York’s ‘Foodie Streets’ is Fossgate—visitors will find a plethora of independent restaurants there. York is also home to one of the region’s best food festivals. York Food and Drink Festival is an annual event taking place in September and is a massive showcase for the restaurants, hotels, shops and food manufacturing companies.

One of the iconic foods—Yorkshire pudding has previously been name Yorkshire icon (above York Minster and the Yorkshire Dales: Dalesman Survey 2014). The York Roast Company in York city centre offers a special internet sensation ‘Yorkypud wrap’ that is essentially the Sunday dinner wrapped in a Yorkshire pudding! Visitors can also join the cooking classes in York and learn to make their own Yorkshire puddings.

York’s world-renowned tea rooms Bettys Café Tea Rooms— are simply the place to sample a Yorkshire Fat Rascal and a ‘proper’ cup of tea. Another afternoon tea experience not to be missed is Countess of York - officially the UK’s best afternoon tea (Visit England, 2017) inside a beautifully restored carriage at the National Railway Museum.

York’s award-winning chefs include Roux-trained Michael Hjort at Melton’s (also the person behind the Food and Drink Festival), Andrew Pern at Star Inn The City and Tommy Banks at Roots.

Anyone who fancies a true gourmet pint should visit one of the many beer houses including the House of Trembling Madness (a medieval drinking hall). Visitors can also take a tour of the local craft breweries with Brew York. While the wine enthusiasts can join wine tasting evenings at the Pairings Wine Bar. You can often breathe in the scent of chocolate as you walk through the street, when it comes to chocolate, there really is no place like York. York’s reputation as the city of chocolate dates back to the 20th century when two of the most famous names in chocolate set up shop: Joseph Rowntree went on to create Kit Kat, Smarties and Aero, and Joseph Terry the Chocolate Orange and All Gold collection. Today York’s love of chocolate is as strong as ever and can be experienced in numerous attractions, restaurants and shops around the city. For real chocolate enthusiasts, there is an annual spring Chocolate Festival complete with a ‘chocolate market’ showcasing local chocolate makers’ creations, and also chocolate tastings and workshops.

York’s Chocolate Story is one of York’s biggest visitor attractions celebrating the mouth-watering story of chocolate and confectionery in York. There visitors can discover chocolate’s origins, how to make it and how to taste it like an expert. The new exhibition, opened in 2019, tells the history of world’s most famous chocolate bars-Kit Kat.

While in York, visitors can also embark on a Chocolate Trail—a sweet adventure with treats at every turn from chocolate-making workshop at York Cocoa House to Goddard’s House and Gardens—home of Terry family. Leaflet can be picked up from the Visitor Information Centre. To complete the trail visitors can stay in York’s only chocolate-themed hotel-Hotel Indigo York.
Film Lovers York

From beautiful countryside to medieval cobbled streets, York is a perfect backdrop to many movies and series. Starting from action-animated feature film ‘Water Babies’ (1978) filmed in York, the city continues to be a prime filming location even now.

One of the most beautiful stately homes-Castle Howard-can be spotted in ‘Brideshead Revisited’ (1981, 2008) as well as ‘Death Comes to Pemberley’ (2013) that also featured iconic York Minster, St William’s College, Treasurer’s House, York Castle Museum and Harewood Castle.

British biographical drama film ‘Elizabeth’ (1998) also had some scenes filmed at York Minster, while another royal drama film ‘Victoria’ (2013) once again went to Castle Howard and Harewood Castle.

Visitor’s to York who arrive by train will most likely follow the footsteps of the famous boy wizard Harry Potter. Not many know that the scene at King’s Cross from ‘Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone’ (2001) where Harry is left alone on the pedestrian bridge was filmed in York Railway Station. Another interesting fact is that the film depiction of the Diagon Alley was inspired by the Shambles-one of oldest medieval streets in the whole of Europe.

Another film based on the fantastic novel by Susanna Clarke-‘Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell’ (2015) had some scenes filmed in York Minster and St William’s College.


Many famous actors were born or spent a great time of their lives in York, including Dame Judi Dench - one of the finest, best-known and best-loved English actresses. She was born in York in 1934 and attended the Mount School. Another familiar face is David Bradley, who most will know as the cadaverous caretaker Argus Filch in the Harry Potter films. David was born in York and had a glittering theatre career, he also played God in the 1976 York Mystery Plays.

The King of the Iron Throne Robert Baratheon-played by Mark Addy-was also born and bred in York. He is also known for his roles of the insecure security guard Dave in ‘The Full Monty’ and Fred Flintstone in ‘Flintstones in Las Vegas’.

‘Emmerdale’ - the popular English soap television programme’s star Dave Glover was also born in York in 1972. He also played the role of Dr Patrick Spiller in ‘Casualty’.

Visitors can not only learn the history of films and movie stars in York, but also enjoy a screening of recent and older movies in one of York’s best movie theatres. City Screen York is one of Britain’s Picture House cinemas. While the Brandy Brown’s Cinema at 1331 is a luxurious attic cinema full of atmosphere with all of the mod cons.
Shopaholics York

A centre of trade since Roman times, York still excels at providing retail therapy for shopaholics of every type. The range of unique independent and designer shops are intertwined with world-class attractions, pedestrianised streets and peaceful havens, so shopping and sightseeing are easily combined. Shops in the city centre boast an array of unique items from heraldic art to handcrafted souvenirs, unusual books, antiques and designer clothes.

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Romantic York

York, with its cobbled streets and the smell of chocolate making in the air is the ultimate city of romance. W.H. Auden, who was born in York on 21 February 1907 wrote “O’ Tell Me the Truth about Love” and here is where one can hear all about it.

Novelists, past and present, have taken York and its evocative surroundings as inspiration for their work. Within a short drive of the city lie the romantic Yorkshire Moors where Emily Brontë penned her novel ‘Wuthering Heights’, the story of unrivalled love between Cathy and Heathcliff.

Majestic and imposing, York Minster is the largest Gothic cathedral north of the Alps. Did any building in Britain ever inspire such feelings from the heart as this architectural masterpiece? The Duke of Kent married Miss Katherine Worsley here in June 1961; this was the first Royal wedding in York Minster since King Edward III married Philippa of Hainault there in 1328. In 2019 the famous UK singer Ellie Goulding married Caspar Jopling in the halls of the Minster.

Almost half of all wedding ceremonies that take place in York are for couples who do not live here. This could be due to the fact that York has previously appeared in The Independent newspaper’s 50 Best Places in the World to be Married. Civil weddings and partnerships in York take place in arguably some of the most romantic venues in the country - medieval guildhalls, unique attractions and stately homes. Nearly 1,000 civil weddings take place in York every year.

Railways are an important part of York’s heritage. The city boasts a beautiful, Victorian railway station - could there be a more slushy setting for farewells or reunions? York is also home to the world’s greatest Railway Museum. Here one can marry on the platform alongside beautifully restored royal carriages.

Two Love Lanes can be found in York, double the quota in most cities. One is behind The Mount, the other alongside the Ouse in Fulford. While idyllic gardens not only provide the perfect setting for one’s wedding pictures but be a perfect first date romantic walk location.

York is the home of chocolate, and what is a better way to say ‘I love you’ than with a handmade box of chocolates? One of the biggest collections of Valentine cards in the UK can also be found in the York Castle Museum. A thousand or more messages of love are in the archives - including possibly the oldest printed Valentine’s card in the world. This was published on 12 January 1797 by John Fairburn of 146 Minories, London.

Finally, according to the local superstition, kissing your partner below the West Window of York Minster will make you stay together forever. Beloved can look up at the window to see the heart-shape worked into the tracery, known as the ‘Heart of Yorkshire’.

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Example two day itineraries

Let us help you organise your press trip so you have more time to write. Each year Visit York hosts hundreds of journalists, travel writers and influencers in the city, from both the UK and overseas, and across print, online and broadcast media. These two-day itineraries are examples of how you can spend your time in the city. To organise your press visit, please get in touch with our team.
Foodie itinerary:

**Day One**

**MORNING:** Visit York’s Chocolate Story to learn about the history of chocolate in the confectionary capital of the UK. From the creation of Terry’s Chocolate Orange to the Kit Kat Chocolatory, the 90 minute tour will take you on a sweet journey across decades to see where it all began.

**LUNCH:** Try out one of the street food stalls at Shambles Market Food Court offering a range of cuisines from across the world. Choose from the in-house Smoked Pork Bun from Shambles Kitchen, Persian Chicken Wrap from Los Moros or a delicious Crepe from KREP.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Follow the guided tour around the only craft brewery within York’s ancient city walls-Brew York. See how the beer is made right in the heart of the city and sample some of the best craft beers North of England has to offer.

**DINNER:** Roots York is a sharing plate restaurant embracing the Banks family’s farming ethos. Redefining the traditional four seasons, Tommy Banks has created three growing groups inspired by Oldstead’s ingredients: ‘The Hunger Gap’, ‘Time of Abundance’ and ‘The Preserving Season’.

**OVERNIGHT:** Stay at Hotel Indigo York—a boutique hotel in the heart of York with stylish bedrooms reflecting the history and chocolate heritage of the city.

**Day Two**

**MORNING:** Become a chef yourself-book a course at The Grand Cookery School to learn to cook one of your favourite dishes. Classes range from short 2-hour sessions to half and full days. You will also get to enjoy your cooking masterpiece with a glass of local wine at the end of the class.

**LUNCH:** Indulge in cheese tasting at Love Cheese by trying locally produced as well as world-known cheeses in Cheese & Tea or Cheese & Beer pairings.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Indulge in a Champagne Afternoon Tea in the grand setting of Countess of York located in a restored Victorian rail carriage.

**DINNER:** Located in the corner of the historic city centre, is Mr P’s Curious Tavern-Andrew Pern’s quirky venture re-defines the modern Hostelry with imaginatively created dishes cooked by Michelin-trained Chefs, often drawing on Pub Grub traditions. Book ahead for the ‘full experience’ with our six-course Tasting Menu at £39.50 per person.
Historic itinerary:

Day One

**MORNING:** Climb atop the Clifford’s Tower—the last remaining part of York Castle. Originally built by William the Conqueror, it was twice burned to the ground, before being rebuilt by Henry III in the 13th century. The tower offers sweeping panoramic views of York and the surrounding countryside.

**LUNCH:** Grab a bite in the halls of Valhalla, where the Brave shall live forever. Treat yourself to a horn of mead like a real Viking warrior.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Visit the National Railway Museum—home to iconic locomotives and an unrivalled collection of engineering firsts, the museum celebrates the past, present and future of innovation on the railways.

**DINNER:** Enjoy a hearty meal at Roman Bath pub, where you can also step underground to see the Roman Bathhouse remains of Roman York.

**OVERNIGHT:** Stay at the Elmbank Hotel designed by architects J. B. & W. Atkinson and built around 1870. It is a city hotel in a grade II listed building with a country house atmosphere. Murals, frescoes and a magnificent oak staircase leading to a gallery with stained glass windows are just a few of the fine examples of art nouveau.

Day Two

**MORNING:** Travel back in time at JORVIK Viking Centre, while exploring the sights, sounds and smells of a Viking settlement in York.

**LUNCH:** Enjoy a 2 course lunch from the ‘Conspirators Menu’ at Guy Fawkes Inn - birthplace of the notorious plotter, Guido Fawkes. The food is served in a setting befitting of the time of the famous plotter, lit by candlelight and gas lamps.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Explore the Yorkshire Museum from the Jurassic period to modern times. See how York has changed from the point of its establishment by Romans, throughout the Viking and Anglo-Saxon rule.

**DINNER:** Enjoy some Nordic inspired tapas at Hilt, while learning the art of traditional axe-throwing.
Culture & art itinerary:

Day One

**MORNING:** Visit one of the world’s most magnificent cathedrals - York Minster. The cathedral’s East window is the largest expanse of stained glass in Europe. You can also climb the Central Tower for the breath-taking views of the city.

**LUNCH:** Marvel at one of the largest collections of ceramics in the country as well as a range of art installations and paintings at York Art Gallery and the CoCA (Centre of Ceramic Arts). Enjoy a light lunch at the gallery’s café.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Walk down Shambles after the city empties in the evening. This cobbled street is one of the oldest streets in Europe and is mentioned in Doomsday book. Shambles is also believed to be inspiration behind the film depiction of Harry Potter’s Diagon Alley.

**DINNER:** Enjoy locally sourced Steak and Ale dinner at The Whippet Inn.

**OVERNIGHT:** Stay at The Principal York steps away from the train station. The hotel exquisitely combines the grandeur of late-Victorian architecture with the comforts of modern travel.

Day Two

**MORNING:** Explore Merchant Adventurer’s Hall - the inspirational home to The Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York and delve into York’s entrepreneurial history. Grab a coffee at the Merchant’s coffee house.

**LUNCH:** Partake in the traditional English Afternoon Tea at Betty’s Café Tea Rooms.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** See and purchase work by emerging local and UK artists at According to McGee. Also visit Azendi for the one-of-a-kind Heart of Yorkshire jewellery.

**DINNER:** Set in a charming 17th century building in the centre of York, the Chopping Block at Walmgate Ale House uses Yorkshire produce to create diverse modern food like Aubergine stuffed with Lamb and Pomegranate. On Sunday treat yourself to a traditional Roast.
Outdoors itinerary:

Day One

**MORNING:** Explore the ancient city of York on an award winning bike tour with an entertaining, knowledgeable guide. York Cycling Tours will take you off the beaten track to fascinating historic places you won’t see on a typical bus or walking tour.

**LUNCH:** Grab a bite from one of York’s independent cafes such as Brew & Brownie or Mannions and head to the York Museum Gardens, where you can have a picnic in the shade of the ruins of St Mary’s Abbey.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Walk the full expanse of the ancient York City Walls established over 2000 years ago and providing great views of the city’s hidden corners.

**DINNER:** Dine at York’s most vibrant restaurant Star Inn the City located on the bank of the river Ouse and part of York Museum Gardens. Enjoy a great view as well as delicious food offer from top chef Andrew Pern.

**OVERNIGHT:** Stay at Jollydays-a unique tented camp close to nature and the rhythms of the season. Take a journey back to simpler times, a place to talk, laugh, relax and reflect.

Day Two

**MORNING:** Head to the North York Moors National Park to experience the vast swathes of heather moorland. Exploring the National Park’s 26-mile Jurassic-age coastline-from historic, picture-postcard fishing villages like Robin Hood’s Bay to hideaway coves and soaring cliffs with breath-taking views, is an absolute must.

**LUNCH:** Escape the crowds and experience the serene beauty of this impressive monastic site - Rievaulx Abbey, founded by St Bernard of Clairvaux in 1132. Enjoy lunch in the stunning backdrop of the Abbey.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Towering over the attractive market town of Helmsley, and surrounded by spectacular banks and ditches, Helmsley Castle is an imposing sight with a wealth of history. Stroll through beautiful displays of flowers, fruit and vegetables in the nearby Helmsley Walled Gardens.

**DINNER:** A concept like no other The Botanist is a secret garden for food and drink. Offering a wide selection of curious botanical cocktails, craft beers and ales as well as an extensive menu of marvellous delights.
Family itinerary:

Day One

**MORNING:** Cruise along the river Ouse with City Cruises York, while learning more about the historic city. For a more ‘hands-on’ experience rent one of the self-drive Red Boats.

**LUNCH:** If you have a trusty York Pass, you can enjoy a free pizza or pasta at ASK Italian where outstanding Italian cooking is combined with the setting of the magnificent historic building.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Let your kids become archaeologists for the day at DIG: The Archaeological Adventure. Four excavation pits are filled with Roman, Viking, medieval and Victorian finds, so kids can grab a trowel and dig up the clues that show how people lived in these times.

**DINNER:** Fancy Hank’s is an independent restaurant tucked away in the laid-back-streets of the historic Minster Quarter and offers good mood food inspired by two brothers travels through the 11 states of America’s Deep South.

**OVERNIGHT:** Book a family cottage room at Middletons York for the perfect home away from home on your city break to York. Ideal for large families of up to 6 people.

Day Two

**MORNING:** Operating over summer - York Maze is a seasonal attraction that will give the whole family an “a-mazing” day out to explore the giant maize maze and enjoy over 20 exciting rides, shows and attractions.

**LUNCH:** Treat your family to a cup of tea and cake at Teddy Bear tea Rooms above the shop where you can find the finest Teddy Bears available from Winnie the Pooh to old fashioned timeless Teddy Bears.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Step onto the cobbles of the York Castle Museum’s Victorian street to meet the local characters, visit the authentic shops and discover the weird and wonderful collections from this bygone era.

**DINNER:** Dine at ZAAP Thai and feel like you’ve been transported into a Bangkok street food market, with all its magical hustle and bustle, neon lighting, funky tuk tuks and, of course the most amazing Thai street food.
Luxury itinerary:

Day One

**MORNING:** Start your day by marvelling at the dramatic architecture & interiors of Castle Howard - one of Britain’s finest historic houses.

**LUNCH:** Have an Afternoon Tea at Castle Howard - indulge in an award winning selection of exquisite savoury treats and an array of sweet delights.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Enjoy a luxurious spa experience at The Grand York - a secluded and tranquil escape in the centre of York. Book a relaxing treatment to unwind from the city’s hustle and bustle.

**DINNER:** Dine at the critically-acclaimed Le Cochon Aveugle. Serving an ever-changing, seasonal menu, this intimate dining experience is rooted in the Parisian bistronomy concept of stripping back fine-dining to a more relaxed and informal setting, making the experience more fun and approachable.

**OVERNIGHT:** Stay at The Grand York - the only five-star hotel in the city. Originally the headquarters of the North Eastern Railway, the Grand retains its original splendour with intricate stonework, marble detailing and sweeping stone staircase.

Day Two

**MORNING:** Go on a designer shopping-spree at York Designer Outlet-host to 120 stores including high-street and designer brands.

**LUNCH:** Enjoy lunch at The Bow Room Restaurant at Grays Court, where good food plays a central role with seasonal ingredients and innovative team of talented chefs.

**AFTERNOON/EVENING:** Watch a local production play at York Theatre Royal - one of the UK’s leading producing theatres.

**DINNER:** Experience the tongue in cheek approach to British food from a husband and wife chef duo at Arras. An independent restaurant offers a unique luxury dining experience in the heart of the city.
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