

DARK TOURISM – YORK



York has a dark past, its history is rife with tales of guts, gore and ghouls. In 2002, the International Ghost Research Foundation declared York as the most haunted city in Europe, with 504 hauntings within the confines of the ancient walls. Founded by the 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.

Micklegate Bar Museum Henry VII Experience

www.henryviexperience.com

Micklegate Bar is the iconic royal gateway of York where you can discover The Henry VII Experience and explore the life of the first Tudor King as he created a new era in English History, having defeated his rival Richard III.

Experience his early years as an exiled Lancastrian heir to the throne, who roamed the land gaining support and praise, eventually ruling the country!

Discover his impact on York, as the city continued to prosper throughout his reign, with interactive experiences and displays dedicated to the life of the Tudor King.



For a more gruesome look at Henry's past, step into the Tudor camp, where grisly facts about the Tudor times written by 'Horrible Histories' author Terry Deary await discovery. Learn about the life of this iconic royal, in the very Gateway where his enemies' heads were spiked.

Monk Bar Richard III Experience

www.richardiiiexperience.com



The JORVIK Group's attraction invites visitors to step foot into the historic Monk Bar to discover The Richard III Experience. Explore the life of the last Plantagenet King as he struggled for the throne and power during his short reign.

Experience his mighty moments of battle, with multimedia presentations, and displays of the authentic medieval weapons and armour used to fight his opponents during the bloody War of the Roses.

Discover the grisly facts of Richard's rule in the Medieval camp, with gory facts provided by 'Horrible Histories' author Terry Deary. Located within the city walls, and visited by Richard III himself, now visitors can truly follow in the footsteps of the Yorkist King!

Ghost Bus

www.theghostbustours.com/york/

The York Ghost Bus Tour is a theatrical sightseeing tour, taking visitors on a journey around the darker side of York. A creepy conductor will show the sights and help passengers discover York's dark and terrible secrets while on-board a classic 1960s Routemaster bus.

Folk can learn about the sinister side of many of York's most famous landmarks including Clifford's Tower, York Minster and Dick Turpin's grave. As well as visit some of the many haunted buildings in what is claimed to be Europe's most haunted city, while hearing about the ghosts that reside within the medieval city walls.

The Bloody Tour of York

www.thebloodytourofyork.co.uk

Mad Alice takes visitors on a 90 minute walking tour of the city, down snickleways and side streets recounting York's gruesome and grisly past.

Stories of invasions, executions and heads on spikes are rife on every corner. As are tales of some famous historical characters. Discover the true history of the city on this fun and fascinating tour for all the family to enjoy.

Private tours are also available by booking via email or telephone. Tours running from late September to March are conducted by candlelight.



York Cemetery

www.yorkcemetery.org.uk

York Cemetery opened in 1837 and went into voluntary liquidation in 1966. The liquidation took thirteen years during which time all that could be disposed of for profit was sold. Sadly, nobody was interested in running the site and it devolved to the Crown. All rights of burial and access to the site were lost.

Over the liquidation period, the cemetery became a derelict wilderness and its buildings decayed, the collapse of the roof of the Grade II* listed neo-classical Chapel in August 1984 being the final act in the drama. This was the point at which a group of concerned York citizens decided that steps had to be taken to resolve the situation and formed The Friends of York Cemetery and then York Cemetery Trust.

York Cemetery is proud of its Grade II* listed Chapel, which places it amongst the top 6% most important listed buildings in the United Kingdom. In addition, the Gatehouse, part of the wrought iron boundary fence, and six monuments are Grade II listed.

Visitors are invited to take a stroll through the headstones or join a guided walk to explore the history of this unique cemetery.

York Dungeon

www.thedungeons.com/york/en/



York Dungeon brings together an amazing cast of theatrical actors, special effects, stages and scenes in an exciting walkthrough experience that all visitors see, hear, touch, smell and feel. It's funny, scary and keeps visitors on the edge until the very end.

The 75 minute journey takes visitors through 2000 years of York's dark history. Guided by a full cast of actors, visitors walk through The Dungeon, moving from show to show. Shows are based on York's real history

(minus the boring bits). Get up close and personal with local legends including Eric Bloodaxe and Dick Turpin.

It's a fully themed experience. That means 360° sets, full on authenticity and theatrical storytelling. On their journey visitors pass through York Castle Prison, hear the tale of the notorious highwayman Dick Turpin and join the traitors' rebellion as Henry VIII brings the wrath of the Tudors against the City of York.

Rigg Monument

Located in the grounds of St Lawrence's Church, Lawrence Street. A boating accident on the River Ouse resulted in the drowning of four sons and two daughters of John and Ann Rigg, aged from six to 19. The family tragedy became a national tragedy and a monument to the six was built in the graveyard of St Lawrence's Church. Over the next decades the monument became well known and was seen as a visitor attraction.

The monument has a fine stone base and surround, brick back, and railings, with an ornate and sentimental inscription, including a poem in a Romantic style evoking the shock felt at the accident. Over the decades it became overgrown and dilapidated, and much of the inscription was no longer legible. The original cost of the monument was raised by public subscription in York and nationally, and local craftspeople (masons, bricklayers, and iron workers) were employed to build the monument.

A crowdfunding project in 2017, led by Make It York, led to the restoration of the monument.

Castle Museum Prison Cells

www.yorkcastlemuseum.org.uk

York Castle Museum is housed in 18th century prison buildings. Here visitors can get a flavour of what life was really like in the original cells and see some of the most infamous inmates brought to life. York Castle Prison is part of the museum and there is no extra charge for visiting it.

Experience a brutal and crooked prison and meet its most notorious prisoner: the legendary highwayman, Dick Turpin. York Castle Prison focuses on the lives of eight former inmates, including Turpin. The others include the last woman to be burned at the stake in Yorkshire, a Luddite, a notorious turnkey, a man who was beaten so badly in prison he died and a young tearaway who went on to lead a successful life in Australia.



There is also a database of former prisoners and victims where visitors can check their own family name. York Castle has been a site of justice and incarceration for almost 1,000 years. William the Conqueror built the first castle in 1068 and we know from written references that it had a prison. The site is still a seat of justice today; the 18th century courthouse is now York Crown Court. It still has holding cells and people accused of serious crimes are still tried there as they have been for almost 1,000 years.

Dick Turpin's Grave

St George's Churchyard, George Street



Whether you consider him a highwayman of legend, or a low-down thief and murderer, there is no question that Dick Turpin is world famous. Essex-born Dick Turpin was a member of a violent gang of thieves. He became a highwayman when the others were arrested, and, as the authorities closed in on him, he shot a man dead in Epping Forest in 1737. He fled to Yorkshire under the assumed name John Palmer, and was imprisoned at Beverley for shooting a man's cockerel in October 1738.

Turpin was transferred to York Castle jail when evidence emerged linking him to the more serious crime of stealing horses. At the end of March 1739 he was tried at York Assizes, convicted and condemned to death. The public can visit his grave at St George's Churchyard on George Street, where it is marked by a headstone dedicated to "John Palmer otherwise Richard Turpin, the notorious highwayman and horse stealer". It's pretty large – but then legend has it Turpin was buried with his horse Black Bess (although in reality he never owned a horse of that name).

Golden Fleece

www.thegoldenfleeceyork.co.uk

Reputedly the most haunted pub in York, this early 16th century inn is certainly one of the oldest, having first been documented in 1503.

It is believed that no fewer than 15 spirits haunt this quaint, unsuspecting pub. The most notable of these reports is the spirit of Lady Anne Peckett, the wife of the one-time mayor of York, John Peckett. Many guests and staff have reported the sighting of a woman wandering the corridors of the inn, moving things around, and walking up and down the staircase in the dead of night.

Other ghosts include a man dressed in red coat uniform and holding a pistol. He's known by people as One Eyed Jack, whether this is because he has been seen to wear a patch or is missing an eye is not known. He is also joined by a grumpy old man, both of whom are often sighted in the bottom bar area. A young boy is also seen in the top bar. It's believed he is the ghost of a boy who was trampled to death by horses outside the inn some time during the Victorian period.

York Treasurer's House

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/treasurers-house-york

One morning in 1953, an apprentice plumber, named Harry Martindale, was installing a new central heating system in the cellars of the Treasurer's House when he heard the distinctive sound of a distant horn. He thought it strange that the sound should reach him so far underground, but carried on working up his ladder. The horn continued to sound, each time appearing a little closer.

Suddenly a huge great cart horse emerged straight through the brick wall of the cellar! Harry fell off his ladder in shock and, as he crouched on the floor, he was able to see clearly that the horse was being ridden by a dishevelled Roman soldier. He was slowly followed by several fellows, dressed in rough green tunics and plumed helmets, carrying short swords and spears. They all looked



down in a dejected manner as they continued towards the Minster, apparently on their knees! As they reached the centre of the room, however, they emerged into a recently excavated area and it became clear that they were walking on the old Roman road buried 15 inches below the surface!

Harry scrambled frantically up the cellar steps to safety of the ground floor. Here he was met by the house's curator who exclaimed, "You've seen the Roman soldiers, haven't you?" Apparently the ghostly troop had been seen several times in the past and impressive descriptions have been forthcoming from a number of witnesses.

Visitors are invited to take a guided tour of the cellar and see for themselves...

Ye Olde Starre Inne



This pub dates back to 1644, however, historians believe the cellar is much older than this. It is from this cellar that most of the activity occurs, with screams and groans often heard. It was here where Royalist soldiers were treated during the inns' time as a temporary hospital during the Civil War.

Another frequent experience is the sighting of an old lady wearing black clothes. There isn't much known about the identity of the woman, or how she died, but she is often seen on the staircase.

Perhaps one of the strangest hauntings in this list, is the ghosts of two black cats that reportedly haunt this pub. Local legend says the cats were bricked up in the pillar between the door and the bar. On several occasions, customers have brought their dogs in with them, and whilst having their drinks the dogs have growled, snarled, and in some instances have bolted towards the pillar, with one dog knocking itself out doing so! The tradition of burying cats in the walls is a tradition that goes back a long way throughout Yorkshire. It is believed this ritual protects the building against both fire and bad luck.

For more information and to book your stay in York:

Visit www.visitYork.org

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