

MEDIEVAL YORK



York has a history spanning over 2000 years, of which the medieval period played a significant part. York was one of medieval England's most powerful cities, rivalling London in size and importance- it was the main administrative and judicial centre for the north of England.

Evidence of York's medieval history can still be seen in the city today...

WALK....



... the City Walls

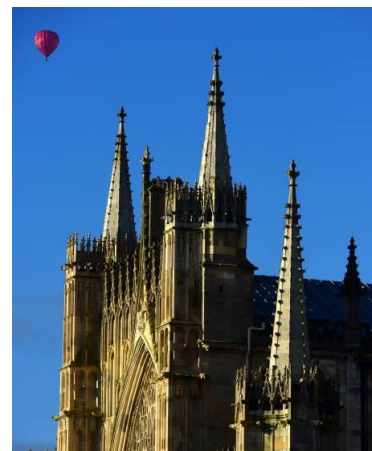
The Medieval City of York was surrounded by walls with four main 'bars' or gateways into the city. At 3.4 kilometres long, the beautifully preserved walls are the longest medieval town walls in England still to exist today. About 2.5 million people walk along all or part of the City walls each year, enjoying some amazing views. The completion of the entire circuit will take approximately 2 hours.

There are four main bars or gateways, one minor bar, one Victorian gateway, one postern (a small gateway) and 45 towers. The walls weigh approximately 100,000 metric tonnes.

VISIT...

...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 (more original medieval stained glass than any other church in England), has the city's best views from the Tower and is rich in historical artefacts, dating back to the Roman age.



...The Richard III Experience



The Richard III Experience invites visitors to step foot into the historic Monk Bar to discover the story behind the infamous monarch. 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 details 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.

Combine a visit to The Richard III Experience by taking a short walk along York's medieval City Walls to continue the line of the throne at The Henry VII Experience. www.richardiiiexperience.com.

...The Henry VII Experience

Micklegate Bar, the iconic royal gateway of York, invites visitors to discover The Henry VII Experience. Explore the life of the first Tudor King as he created a new era in English History, after defeating 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 the city of York, as it 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 our Tudor camp, where grisly facts about the Tudor times written by 'Horrible Histories' author Terry Deary await discovery. Find out about the life of this iconic royal, in the very gateway where his enemies' heads were spiked.



Combine a visit to The Henry VII Experience by taking a short walk along York's medieval City Walls to see life under his predecessor to the throne, Richard III. www.henryviexperience.com

...Barley Hall



This meticulously restored medieval townhouse, right in the heart of York, was once the home of Alderman William Snawsell, Goldsmith and Lord Mayor of York. Its remains were found behind centuries of buildings in the atmospheric Ginnel Coffee Yard. Step back in time and discover what life was like for the Alderman and his family in the 15th century. Costumed guides or an audio tour – presented by York-born Judi Dench and Robert Hardy – fill you in on the building's

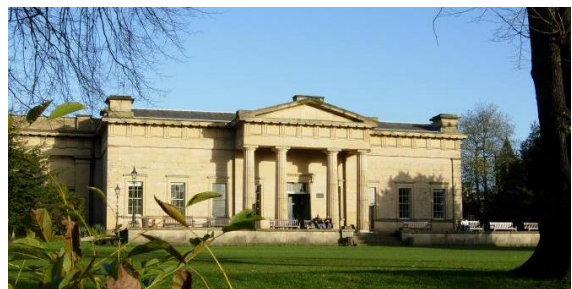
colourful history. www.barleyhall.org.uk

...Merchant Adventurer's Hall

The splendidly named Merchant Adventurers were one of medieval York's most prestigious guilds. These were the overseas traders, the men who helped make the city rich, and their guildhall reflects their exalted status. The building is one of the best preserved of its kind in Europe, and has stood largely untouched for over 600 years. It is the largest timber-framed building in the city and tells the story of York's growth, prosperity and power. For more information visit www.theyorkcompany.co.uk

...Yorkshire Museum

The Yorkshire Museum is home to a treasure trove of historical gems and has a dedicated medieval exhibition - Capital of the North - which features some of the most prestigious and significant medieval objects ever found in Britain. Displays include The Middleham Jewel, The Cawood Sword, The York Helmet and The Escrick Ring.



...DIG

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

EXPLORE...

... York's Snickleways



Lady Peckett's Yard, Coffee Yard, Mad Alice Lane, Whip Ma Whop Ma Gate. The names alone are irresistible. A network of 'ginnels' or alleyways winds through the historic core of York as it has done for centuries, each with a story to tell. You can explore almost the whole of the city centre using these medieval shortcuts. York has its own name for these tiny lanes – 'Snickleways' – a word coined by a local tour guide made up of the word 'Snicket', 'Ginnel' and 'Alleyway'.

YorkWalk offers a programme of themed walking tours of York throughout the year (must be pre-booked). Many of these explore the hidden York, and unwind the fascinating history of the city. These include, amongst others:

- **The Snickelways of York**
Explore the hidden back lanes of York, which residents and visitors alike don't always notice, and hear about their colourful histories.
- **Inaccessible and Hidden York**
A unique chance to enter parts of York never open to the public, to descend into cellars and Roman remains, and explore secret passages, crypts, medieval churches and hidden Georgian interiors.
- **The Graveyard, Coffin and Crypt Tour**
A chance for visitors to explore the hidden city of the dead; descend to a secret crypt, sample Roman and medieval coffins and visit plague sites.
- **Historic Toilet Tour**
A saga of convenience from Roman hygiene to C19th attempts to prevent 'nuisance' and promote public decency. Also visitors are able to sample the dubious comforts of medieval garderobes.
- **Guy Fawkes Trail**
Visitors can explore the (several!) birthplaces and haunts of one of York's most infamous sons – Guy Fawkes of Gunpowder Plot fame.

www.yorkwalk.co.uk

SHOP...

...on 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 cafés and quirky boutiques.



REFLECT...

... at the Bar Convent Museum

The history of Christianity in the north of England is explained in this charming museum housed in a Georgian building which is also a working convent, licensed café, gift shop and one of York's most unusual guesthouses (eighteen bedrooms are available). The beautiful chapel was hidden in the centre of the building to avoid detection at a time when Roman Catholics were subject to persecution. The Bar Convent is the oldest active convent in the country. www.bar-convent.org.uk

... in one of York's medieval Churches



visitor books.

York has a legacy of fine medieval churches. The church dominated life in medieval Britain. Everyone was expected to attend church and pay a tenth of their earnings to it. Nineteen churches from this period are still standing. Before the reformation, however, more than twice this number were to be found within the city walls. Regular services are still held in some of these churches. All city churches are grateful to receive donations towards their care and restoration and encourage visitors to sign their

- **Holy Trinity Church, Goodramgate** – Adjoining Lady Row on Goodramgate – York's oldest row of houses, is a little gateway that would be all too easy to miss. It leads to Holy Trinity Church, one of York's finest medieval churches, hemmed in and hidden by buildings on all sides. The

church escaped the 19th century reformers and has retained its original character, with box pews and a stunning east window dating back to 1470.

- **St Michael le Belfry, High Petergate** – standing in the shadow of the Minster, this is the church in which Guy Fawkes was baptised.
- **St Helen's, St Helen's Square** – extensively restored in the 19th century. A medieval glass window, containing the badge of 'The Worshipful Company of Glaziers' recalls medieval times when Stonegate was home to a thriving glass painting industry and St Helen's was the glazier's guild church.
- **St Martin le Grand, Coney Street** – occupies only the south aisle of the original much larger church, damaged by bombing in World War II. The magnificent St Martin window, depicting the life of St Martin of Tours, originally stood in the west wall of the 15th Century church.
- **St Michael's, Spurriergate** – once a parish church this ancient church was reborn in 1989 and offers a relaxing place for refreshments amid the beautiful church features.
- **All Saints, North Street** – Probably the finest of York's medieval churches, and the site of many visions of the Virgin Mary. Contains two famous stained glass windows 'The Corporal Acts of Mercy' and 'The Pricke of Conscience'.
- **Holy Trinity, Micklegate** – Once a substantial Priory, Holy Trinity was the starting point for the annual performance of York Mystery Plays in medieval times. The city's stocks remain in the churchyard today.
- **St Mary's, Bishophill Junior** – Hidden away in the lanes behind Holy Trinity, St Mary's is the oldest church in the city.
- **All Saints, Pavement** – the guild church of the city. Inside you will find crests of York's ancient guilds. The 15th Century octagonal lantern on top of the tower was lit every night to guide those approaching the city through the wilds of the Forest of Galtres which surrounded medieval York.
- **St Mary's, Castlegate** – now an exhibition centre in the care of York Museums Trust. A graceful 15th Century spire sits on top but the inside provide clues to Norman and even earlier phases of building.
- **St Deny's, Walmgate** – Only a small part of the huge medieval church remains. It was topped by a 116ft spire, which was damaged during the Civil War siege of 1644 and finally destroyed by a lightning bolt in 1700. Look inside to find the oldest stained glass in the city.
- **St Margaret's, Walmgate** – Declared redundant as a church in 1974, St Margaret's is now the National Centre for Early Music. The fine Romanesque doorway, carved with the signs of the zodiac, mythological beasts and the Labours of the Months, was rescued centuries ago from a medieval leper hospital that stood just outside the city walls.

- **St Olave's, Marygate** – Founded in 1055 by Siward, Earl of Northumbria. It became the church of the Benedictine order in York, but as the number of monks in that order grew, a bigger church was needed, so St Mary's Abbey was established. St Olave's was heavily damaged during the civil war in 1644, when Parliamentary soldiers fired cannons from its tower.

... in the shadow of St Mary's Abbey

The statuesque ruins of St Mary's Abbey lie in the Museum Gardens, the grounds of the Yorkshire Museum. The picturesque setting has been used as a backdrop to open-air theatre on many occasions, including the York Mystery Plays. St Mary's was founded by King William Rufus in 1088 and for four hundred and fifty years it was the wealthiest and most powerful abbey in the North of England. The buildings were pulled down and its vast wealth taken by Henry VIII when he dissolved the major monasteries in 1539 to fund his wars with France.



For more information and to book your stay in York:

Visit www.visitYork.org

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