HIDDEN GEMS IN YORK

Look up and around all the time when you’re walking through York – you will see little faces looking down at you, peculiar old signs and fascinating details on York’s old buildings. Take Monk Bar for instance. Perched on the two towers of the bar are six stone figures, all seemingly ready to rain down boulders on passers-by. Along Stonegate, at the entrance to Coffee Yard sits the bright red “Printer’s Devil”, a carved sign that indicated the location of the print works up until the 18th century. The apprentices, who carried the hot plates, were known as the printer’s devils. The figure of an American Indian at 76 Low Petergate is the former advertising sign of the tobacconist – the boy’s kilt and headwear represent tobacco leaves. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, sits on the corner of Minster Gates, leaning on a pile of books, to advertise the bookseller’s shop below, where authors and literary readers met as members of one of Britain’s earliest book groups.

York is crammed with museums, attractions, shops, restaurants, pubs and magnificent architecture. Here are a few that are less well known but every bit as deserving of the visitor’s attention.

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

The Henry VII Experience
Micklegate Bar, the iconic royal gateway of the City 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 to be discovered. Learn 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.henryviiexperience.com

The Bar Convent
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 guest houses. 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 Museum is the oldest active convent in the country. www.bar-convent.org.uk

Holy Trinity Church, Goodramgate
Adjourning Lady Row on Goodramgate – York’s oldest row of houses, is a little gateway that would be all too easy to miss, but leads to Holy Trinity Church, one of York’s finest medieval churches, hemmed in and hidden by buildings on all sides. In this secret garden of tranquillity, the ghost of Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland is supposed to wander, searching for his head – he was be-headed for high treason. The church escaped the 19th century reformers and has retained its original character, with box pews and medieval glass, including a stunning east window dating back to 1470. www.visitchurches.org.uk

St Mary’s Abbey
The statuesque ruins of St Mary’s Abbey lie in 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 once the most important Benedictine monastery in northern England. www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk

Statue of Constantine the Great
The striking statue of an elegantly reclining Constantine complete with sword is positioned outside the Minster, a fitting reminder that a great Roman military headquarters once stood on this very site. Nearby is the single surviving pillar excavated from Constantine’s fortress. www.yorkminster.org

Margaret Clitherow’s House
This tiny Shambles house was home to butcher’s wife Margaret Clitherow, a Roman Catholic who sheltered priests from persecution. She suffered for her selfless bravery by being deliberately crushed to death beneath a door in 1586. The house is now a shrine to her memory, and one of the most peaceful and simple chapels in the whole of York.

York Brewery
Take a tour of York’s award-winning independent brewery, to see each stage of the brewing pro-cess. Tasting of the end products – including Stonewall and the stronger Yorkshire Terrier – are of course included! www.york-brewery.co.uk
York Cold War Bunker
Visitors are able to take a guided tour of a semi-submerged secret bunker on the outskirts of York. At the height of the Cold War, Britain had a total of 1,561 nuclear shelters, designed to withstand severe bombardment. The shelter was one of the best surviving examples of its type in the UK, and the first to be designated a Scheduled Monument. Complete with original fixtures and fittings, visitors can experience an atmosphere as authentic as that found in films such as The Ipcress File or the TV series Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. Visits to the Bunker are by pre-booked guided tour only. [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Tucked Away Treasures
Tucked away in York’s historic cobbled streets, medieval timber halls and fine town houses sit amongst York’s bigger attractions and off the beaten track.

Barley Hall
This meticulously restored medieval townhouse, right in the heart of York’s historic streets, was once 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](http://www.barleyhall.org.uk)

Mansion House
CURRENTLY CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
In the centre of York there’s a hidden gem, a building rich in the city’s history, and just waiting to be discovered. Behind its imposing facade, through the blue door is a remarkable story of the Lord Mayors of York and their entertainment for the good of the city! Since 1725 the house has been the home of the Lord Mayors of York and houses one of the finest civic collections in the country, including fine silverware, clocks and furniture. [www.mansionhouseyork.com](http://www.mansionhouseyork.com)

Treasurer’s House
A beautiful house, attractive gardens, welcoming tearoom – and some of the most famous ghosts in York. Originally the Minster’s Treasurer lived on this site; it was his responsibility to run the Minster efficiently. The present building dates from the late 16th century, and was a private residence, but the name stuck. It is now home to a magnificent antiques collection, and is run by the National Trust. And the ghosts? A company of Roman foot soldiers appeared through a cellar wall in 1953 – the terrified young plumber who saw them described their garb in meticulous detail – and experts later confirmed that the house is indeed built over a Roman road. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/treasurershouse/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/treasurershouse/)

Merchant Adventurers’ 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 guild-hall 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. [www.theyorkcompany.co.uk](http://www.theyorkcompany.co.uk)
Fairfax House
Perhaps nowhere sums up Georgian York as well as Fairfax House, one of the most distinguished 18th century town houses in Britain and now the ideal backdrop to the Noel Terry Collection of Furniture, one of the finest of its type. Built in 1762 a stone’s throw from Clifford’s Tower, the house, charming and perfectly proportioned, is a perennially popular visitor attraction. www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk

Exploring York

Ginnels
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.

King’s Staith
Nowadays a pleasant hopping-on point for boat-trips, King’s Staith was once a busy working quay. Plenty of good pubs and cafés in the vicinity make this a great place for sitting and watching the world go by.

River cruises supplied by YorkBoat.
Take a cruise with YorkBoat and explore the River Ouse.

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 Retrace York City Rubbings Trail
The Retrace York City Rubbings Trail is an experience for visitors on the city walls. A map of York has been split up and scattered around the city’s ancient walls. Visitors can assemble a complete map, travelling around the walls in any direction, by taking a rubbing of each panel. The panels highlight a route around the historic defences and also reveal some of York’s fascinating past along the way. The trail’s aim is to encourage children to walk the whole way around the city walls and experience areas of the city which are not normally used.

The York Crafters Trail
Nestled in the streets around the city are a variety of craft shops that offer products for hobbies of all types. From knitting to stitching, from beading to papercrafts, York has it all. Pick up a free trail leaflet in the Visit York Information Centre at 1 Museum Street.

For any further information and your free guide to York, please contact: York Visitor Information Centre, Tel: 01904 550099, email: info@visityork.org or visit the website at www.visityork.org. Press contacts: Kay Hyde, Head of PR & Communications. Tel: 01904 554451, email: kay.hyde@makeityork.com. Katie Parsons, Senior Communications Executive. Tel: 01904 554436, email: katie.parsons@makeityork.com.