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York Guide

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What to do on your study abroad to York, England



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Introduction

There are many things to do in the city of York!

Traveling abroad is an amazing experience but it can also be overwhelming because of a new environment, academics and financial responsibilities. We will give you an overview of what it is like studying in York, England and what you can do while you're here. You do have a lot of free time so take advantage of it and possibly travel outside of York (if you can). However, there is a lot of ground that we need to cover before you get too excited! I hope that this newsletter will help you feel confident about your term abroad. We will cover places you can visit, inexpensive shops, great food to taste and British culture. Before we get to the good stuff, let me give you some key resources for your arrival.

Once you receive your acceptance letter (by the way **CONGRATULATIONS!!**) please be aware of the international programs meetings and emails. I advise you to attend an international zoom meeting in order to ask any specific questions and to gain valuable information for your departure. Keep up to date with the **CDU** guidelines in regards to testing and passenger locator forms. I strongly advise setting up your new student email because that is where you will learn about your courses and other necessary information like getting here through the York bus and **COVID** testing. I promise it will get easier once you arrive on campus. The only stressful part is the traveling, everything else will go swiftly.

After adjusting to your new living space for the term, be prepared to explore the beautiful city of York. York is ~~an~~ a small city but it is filled with a lot to explore from. Throughout your term your professor will also take you on excursions. In your free time, you will be allowed to go to other parts of England. We want to give you some suggestions on where you can ~~go~~ what you can do there.

Overview

Transportation

In order to get to a lot of the towns around England and to other countries you must take the train. You can download the app Trainline and I would advise buying a Railcard. A Railcard is 30 pounds and allows you to get up to 50% off the train tickets. The 30 pounds you pay for the railcard will be paid off after taking the train a few times, especially if you plan on going to Scotland, Edinburgh or London.

I advise purchasing First Bus if you intend to study in York. To take the bus around the town as a student you can buy many different types of tickets like 10 rides for 10 pounds or 85 pounds for the term. I would advise buying the 20 rides for 20 pounds first and then determine what amount of tickets is best for you depending on how often you go into town.

All of the towns are walkable but you can hop on a bus and buy a bus ticket to wherever you want to go. Google maps is your best friend, it even tells you the bus times.

Money

Credit/Debit card:

Before traveling, make sure to let your bank know you will be going abroad so they do not put your card on hold for fraud. Most cards in the UK have a tap to pay feature but some cards in the USA may not. The most common payment methods accepted are Visa, Mastercard and sometimes American Express.

International fees:

Before traveling make sure to ask your bank what the international fees are because when you use your card abroad the bank will charge you a certain percentage extra on every purchase you make. For example, I have Citibank which is a mastercard and my bank charges 3 % of the international fee. Let's say I purchase something for £15, my bank will charge \$0.15.

Apple Pay:

Apple pay is your best friend. Make sure you have apple pay set up before you come because most payment methods are contactless. When using an international card abroad most places need a signature which takes longer when you're in a rush. The self-checkouts will not accept an international card and you will have to go to the register where a person can check you out, but if you have apple pay even though it is set up with an international card you do not need to provide a signature and it will work at the self-check. It is weird but this is very helpful because at grocery stores on campus only self-check out is open at night and you can't use your physical credit/debit card and you will need to use apple pay.

Cash/Exchange:

The currency in the UK is pound sterling and the exchange rate from dollars to pounds is pretty high. I recommend exchanging a good amount of cash before. I have exchanged money in the UK but it costs so much more because of the withdrawing fees. As I said, most places are card only. There are still quite a few bakeries, cafes and other shops that only take cash so always make sure to have cash on you. You can also use change on the buses if for some reason you can't use a card.

York

There are many things to do and see in York! Everytime I go into the city I find something new. We will be listing a few places we loved to go to in the city.

Shops

Shambles and Christmas Market



The Shambles Market is a daily market located in the City Centre of York, England. There are a variety of small shops that include; clothing, jewelry, food courts, paintings, groceries, and souvenirs. It is open every day from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. I recommend bringing a reusable bag to put your things in to make it easier for you. Also, make sure to bring cash and card. Most of the little shops use cards, but a few that I went to only accepted cash. It reminds me of the Farmers Market in Schenectady, which I like home. The Christmas market is very similar to the shambles market, except it is more extensive, sells seasonal items, and is only around for November and December. Support small businesses!

The Shambles



My favorite of all is The Shambles. It is a preserved medieval shopping street in England. The best way I can describe the shambles is a very narrow street with a cluster of buildings side by side. In The Shambles you can find many shops that sell souvenirs, sweets, tea, and food! I love it most of all because it is the inspiration behind Diagon Alley for the Harry Potter movies. Walking into the shambles is a surreal experience being able to experience Harry's first encounter with Diagon Alley.

A couple of our favorite stores in The Shambles are the Ghost Merchant Store and The Shop That Shall Not Be Named. There is a wide range of handcrafted ghosts in the ghost merchant store, and they are different every week. Every ghost is unique and created with a wide range of color schemes. There is a variety of sizes and many different colors.

The Shop That Must Not Be Named is a cute Harry Potter souvenir store. In the shop, they sell tote bags, wands, clothes, notebooks, pins, and many props used in the movie. Definitely, a must if you like Harry Potter.

Everyman Cinema



Enjoy going to the movie theaters? Well this one is the spot for you!! This is a beautiful movie theater located in town. The couches are comfortable and really wide so people can lie down if they want. Also, this is a fancy movie theatre because they get the food right to your seat. All you have to do is order it from the workers and they will bring it right to you! They do have a lot of recent movies. I recommend gaining this experience. It is very different from New York I will say. The chairs are ~~also~~ the food delivered to your table, amazing. They might also have some adult juice but you didn't hear it from me :)!
~~also~~

Places to eat in York

Bao

Gongcha

Bill's

Little Asia Restaurant

Caesar's Italian Restaura



Bao/Meow: If you are craving some Gyoza and bubble tea stop at Meow in town (76 Goodramgate, York YO1 7LF). It has a nice ambiance with some great Kimchi Gyoza. Meow is an extension of the Bao restaurant in the shambles I was discussing earlier.

Gongcha (bubble tea): If you are ever craving a fancy drink go to

Bills (bar and restaurant): An assortment of dishes like seafood, Italian food and American food. A lot of options to choose from and it is right in town. Make sure to make a reservation beforehand. They also have a really nice bar that

Caesar's Italian Restaurant: A nice Italian restaurant with the most delicious pasta. The price is quite reasonable for the taste of it!

Betty's Cafe A taste of England I will say. Known for their famous English tea. Betty's is an elegant restaurant that serves a three course meal with any tea to choose from

Pairings A wine tasting and charcuterie board restaurant. Pairings has the best olives I've ever tasted!

Little Asia Restaurant York has small diverse restaurants all around town. Check out this Korean restaurant, very affordable but they only accept cash!

Affordable Shopping Centers

There are a lot of places to eat in York, but sometimes it can be expensive to go to restaurants all the time. I recommend cooking on the weekends to save you a lot of money. Just know, you are catered for breakfast and dinner only on weekdays. So, try ~~us~~ these stores to shop for lunch and weekends. Below is a list of affordable shopping centers to get all your groceries.

- Poundland- The british version of the dollar store
- ALDI, LIDL and Morrison- Inexpensive groceries like spices, bread, and produce. All of the Uni students go to these shops for cheaper alcohol
- Boots- A great store for purchasing toiletries and household necessities.
- M&S- Clothing and grocery store, good if you need anything specific
- Nisa- the only school store that comes in handy when you do not want to go all the way to town for groceries. It may be expensive so try going to ALDI, LIDL and Morrison before you go here.

Day Trips

Due to the size of the UK, there are many places you can see on the weekends of days you don't have class. Rather than spending your money on plane tickets to leave the country, take a train for 3 pounds to another city and see more UK. My friends and I have done this many times and have seen so much of the UK. Below are a few places I went to that I think are worth the day trip.



Harrogate

One town I would recommend visiting is Harrogate, it is a 30-minute train ride from York, and the town is small, so it is easy to walk around. To get to Harrogate, you can take the 66 or 67 bus from the University of York to the train station. Then, you take the train from York straight to Harrogate. Once you get to Harrogate, you can stop at Betty's Tea. The Betty's in Harrogate was the first Betty's that I went to, and in my opinion, it was nicer than the one in York.

Check out the Harrogate Valley Gardens. There is a skate park and area for kids to play in the garden, old bathhouses that you could look at, and many different types of gorgeous gardens like a Himalayan and Japanese Garden. Lastly, you can visit Saint Wilfrid's Church for free. The church has very beautiful stained glass windows and art. The walk to the church is also lovely, it is about a 20-minute walk from the gardens, and it takes you past the very luxurious houses.

Harewood House



The Harewood house is a gorgeous estate that I recommend everyone to visit! Many movies and tv shows use the Harewood house for their films, such as Downton Abbey and Victoria. Getting to Harewood can be confusing, but it is worth it. When I went to the Harewood house, I took the train to Leeds, from the Leeds train station I walked to the bus stop and took the 36 bus to the Harewood arms which takes you right in front of the Harewood house grounds. You will walk along the road, past the fields right to the front of the house. I recommend buying your tickets to enter the house at the ticket booth instead of online. If you tell the bus driver you are going to the Harewood house, the bus driver will give you a coupon for a percentage off. The Harewood house itself is gorgeous, and you should tour the inside. The gardens at the Harewood estate are some of the best gardens I have seen yet! The produce garden is absolutely gorgeous, with huge pumpkins and fresh vegetables. There is also a pond full of swans. I recommend walking through different (themed?) gardens and then taking the free boat across the river. There's also a bird zoo and other farm animals to see on the estate. You can also grab a bite to eat in the cafe in the house.



Flamborough

On the University of York campus, you can join many different societies, equivalent to clubs on campus that you have to pay a small membership for. I suggest joining the Outdoor Society to see more of the UK on a budget and like walks. I joined the Outdoor society, and one of the places we went to was Flamborough. Even if you are not a part of the outdoor society, you can still sign up for walks for 10 pounds each, and the price includes transportation to the area. I went on a 10-mile walk around the coast of the UK. During the Outdoor society walks, you stop for a pub lunch and grab a drink (including adult juice). I got to go down to the beach, walk along with farms, see cows and horses. I saw over 50 seals playing in the ocean and on the beach, shown in one of the photos above. I highly recommend bringing a wind jacket as being close to the coast is very windy.



Leeds

One of the first towns I explored outside of York was Leeds. You can take a 30-minute train ride to Leeds for just under 4 pounds if you use your railcard! Leeds is a bustling city with lots of shops so if you love shopping Leeds is the place to go. Leeds has many malls with a range of things from vintage clothes to

high-end perfume shops. The photo in the middle is of the Corn Exchange shopping center, which is about a 5-minute walk from the train station. Inside this shopping center, there is a large store of vintage clothing, jewelry, plants, and postcards. After walking through the shopping centers, stop in the city center and grab some hot chocolate from a cafe. I have had some of the best hot chocolate in the UK in Leeds. I suggest just walking around Leeds and seeing what you find, that's what we did when my friends and I went to Leeds.

Day Trips with Professor

You will have the opportunity to go on day trips with your professor and classmates. This is a good chance for you to explore other parts of England and visit specific locations covered in your readings/class materials. It was eyeopening to see many places used to inspire the readings/films. Below are some of the excursions we went on!



Beamish

Beamish is a lovely place to visit if you want to see a disneyfied version of the life of a coal miner. This excursion allowed us to see the life of a coal miner as we read it through George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Beamish is a museum modeled after a town that the miners lived in. In Beamish, you can take a bus to different areas of Beamish such as the town, the housing units, farms, etc.

You can walk around the miners' houses, speak to real miners and go into a coal mine to catch a glimpse of the coal miners' workday. Don't forget to ask staff working in the area you are in questions because they will always have a good story or fact to tell you. When you take the bus into the town, go into all of the buildings and 'stores.' Many of the buildings are also museums. You can see the different vehicles, bikes, and weird inventions created. You can walk into the houses of dentists,

doctors, and schools. Don't forget to stop by the fish and chips shop to grab a bite to eat and watch the fish and chips made on a coal stove!



Whitby

Whitby was one of my favorite places to visit! With a great location by the coast and where Bram Stoker inspired *Dracula* Whitby is a great place to visit around Halloween and see everyone dressed up in their

costumes. To walk up to the Whitby Abbey, you just walk up 199 steps! It may seem like a lot, but it is worth it! You will see what's left of the Whitby Abbey and get an unsettling feeling walking through the graveyard *Dracula* himself walked through and seduced Lucy. While walking around the graveyard, too, people who died off the cliffs in Whitby discussed *Dracula*. After seeing the Abbey and the graveyard, wander back down to the water. Check out where *Dracula's* ship came into Whitby. Don't forget to get some fish and chips! I can vouch that Whitby does have the best fish and chips in England!

Castle Howard



Castle Howard in the winter is a sight to see! Castle Howard is the perfect day trip. Unfortunately, there isn't a convenient way to get there by public transport, so I recommend calling a cab or an Uber. Before you get to the castle, schedule an Uber or taxi for your way back. Many films and shows were at Castle Howard, such as one of my favorite shows, *Bridgerton*! Castle Howard was the Duke of Hastings's home, and you can walk on the exact steps Daphne and Simon walked on.

The Howard family owns over 700 acres of land in the UK. There is a lot to walk around and see on the estate. The tour of the castle itself takes about 30 minutes to walk through, and the Christmas decorations are just

divine! The castle was Narnia themed and the rooms were staged as different scenes in the movie. Some of the Howard family still live on the grounds and use the rooms in the castle. You can also walk around gardens to find many replicas of statues and the Ævi Fountain.



The Lake District

The Lake District was truly magical! Coming from someone who hates hiking, this is the hike to do. The rain, the hills, and the mud can be tough to walk through, but the wildlife is worth it all. After reading a few Wordsworth poems and then visiting the Lake District, I was able to see for myself that the beauty that is the Lake District is indescribable.

During this hike, you can see where Wordsworth lived, the hills he would write about, and walk along the same paths Wordsworth did. You will see fallen trees that have coins stuck in them along the walk. When you do, make a wish with one of your coins and stick it in the tree.

Overnight Trips

Edinburgh

Victoria Street



Victoria's colorful shopfronts and their curves make it a beautiful tourist attraction. Victoria Street is significant to the world of Harry Potter. Victoria Street is the real inspiration for J.K Rowling's Diagon Alley. In Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, Diagon Alley is described as, "The brick he had touched quivered and wriggled—in the middle, a small hole appeared—it grew wider and wider—a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight." From the point of view of my picture, as you continue walking, you can see the curve mentioned in the movie.

Greyfriars Kirkyard

Tom Riddell's Grave

Elizabeth Moodie's Grave

Greyfriars

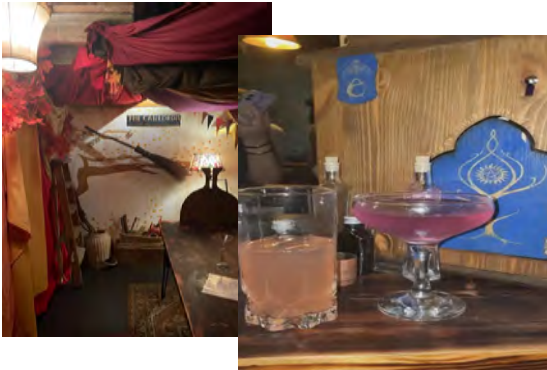
The

Willow
Tree



This graveyard is where J.K Rowling gained her inspiration for some of the names she would use in her Harry Potter books. A graveyard, though? It's evil, but hey, Harry Potter reveals the darkness of the Wizarding World. Natasha and I took a picture of Thomas Riddell's grave, which became Tom Riddle in Harry Potter. Tom Riddle is more known for Lord Voldemort in Harry Potter. Tom Riddle was his muggle name before he became a wizard. He is considered to be one of the darkest wizards of all time. Elizabeth Moodie was the inspiration for Alastor Moody (better known as "Mad Eye Moody"). He imprisoned many inhabitants of

Azkaban. The third picture on the right says, "Greyfriars Bobby." He became famous for guarding the grave of his owner for fourteen years. This is definitely where J.K Rowling found her inspiration for Dobby. Dobby is Harry's caretaker in Harry Potter. He has always been present whenever Harry needed him. Lastly, this tree here is a little similar to the Willow Tree. The Willow tree is bigger, the branches go outwards, which has a resemblance.



The Cauldron

Make sure you are 18 and older to participate in this magical event! The Cauldron is a real world taste of what Harry Potter's wizarding pub, The Leaky Cauldron, resembled. This pub is trendy throughout the movie because most of the wizards hang out there. It was a magical experience being able to create your drinks. We are given a wand at the entrance, and we use it to instruct the servers to provide us with the ingredients for our potions. The wand also had the power to open the mystery box where a lot of the ingredients were hidden. I enjoyed this experience of feeling like a

of wizard. A once in a lifetime experience, do it in Edinburgh if you get the chance. York also has one near the shambles. Please go!



The Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh castle is a historic castle located in Castlehill, Edinburgh. The castle itself is over 900 years old. It is one of the oldest fortified places in Europe. It has a history of the military, royal residence, and fortresses. As you walk up to castle hill, imagine the soldiers, kings and queens that have taken this route to get to the castle. It was built on a castle rock because of a volcano eruption. The wars of Scottish independence took place and the castle honours them showcasing their achievements in war.

Places to Eat in Edinburgh

Taco Libre



A taste of authentic Mexican food. Here are birria tacos (beef shredded tacos) in a corn tortilla with a traditional Mexican drink, Jarritos. It is a small restaurant owned by a Mexican family. I definitely recommend it, it tasted a little like home.

Sran Cafe Bistro



A really tasteful breakfast restaurant. When you are done with your Edinburgh tour, head to this restaurant for tasty bacon, egg and cheese as well as french toast with variety of fruit

Glasgow

The Necropolis



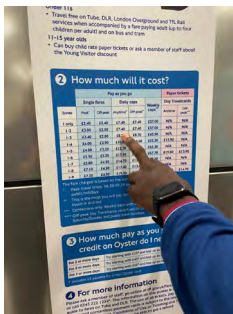
George Square



There are just enough things to see in Glasgow that a weekend there is perfect. I recommend going to the Glasgow Cathedral and the necropolis in the cathedral's backyard. You can always stop at the whisky distillery and have a drink. If you like museums, I highly recommend visiting the Kelvingrove Museum. Don't forget to walk through George Square and see the City Chambers.

London

You will get the chance to do an overnight stay in London that will be covered for two nights by Union College. In London, you are free to plan whatever you want to do as long as you are responsible and arrive early for your departure.



London Tube

The train will be your best friend as you tour London. I recommend purchasing an Oyster card to make your transport a little easier. The Oyster card itself is £5. You can refill through the machine. I recommend putting at least £10. The train ride costs £240 and the bus is £1.05. Make

sure to use Google Maps to help you identify which train or bus leads you to where you want to visit. One more important thing to mention is to keep in mind what platform you have to get on because some trains skip stops. It's pretty easy to get around London once you get on the train. There are also maps that are inside every train to ensure you keep track of your stops.



MINALIMA Store

The minalima store recently opened in London. Minalima's name originates from a couple Miraphora Mina and Eduardo Lima. They are the creation of the graphics of the Harry Potter film series. They crafted the entire graphic style of all the Harry Potter movies. In this

shop you will see all of their artistic creations for the movie. They use some of the real props from the movie inside the table. It is beautiful !!

Word on The Water

This is Word on the Water near the London Bridge. It is a boat filled with donated books that you can purchase. I recommend going here if you would like to find a good deal on a book. You can also sit down inside and read your book which is pretty cool.

Piccadilly Circus

This is Piccadilly Circus which reminds me a lot of Time Square. It is the most popular area in London. There is a lot of name brand clothing, souvenir shops and amazing restaurants. I'd definitely recommend staying near Piccadilly Circus if you come to London. We stayed at Zedwell Piccadilly which is right next to the circus train station and all the popular places. There was also a Christmas market and Christmas decorations for the holiday spirit.

Tottenham Stadium

Into sports? Do you root for Son Heungmin? Tottenham Hotspurs? Well this is the right place for you!! You do not need a ticket to get into the famous store. There are a lot of this year's jerseys that are on the main entrance. I definitely recommend going to North London to visit this stadium if you can. You can use your Oyster card on the bus to go directly to the stadium. Try watching a soccer game in either London, York, Liverpool or Manchester. I think it'll be a cool experience!!

Final Words

It may take time to adjust to everything but definitely make the most out of it. You are the only person that can make this experience worth it. Be outgoing and talk to a lot of people because they are the ones who will make York fun. We definitely had to grow confidence to talk to our flat mates and also other students on campus. The people you meet on a term abroad are friends and connections you will have for a long time. The people make leaving so much harder.

As we reflect, we realized the wide range of cultures we learned. We learned about German, British, Italian, French, and Belgium culture. Now if we ever want to visit these places, we have people who will guide us. It is perfectly okay to feel overwhelmed by the different education system. You are not alone and there are many resources from Union College that can help you out. Always ask questions if you are concerned

about something, make sure you feel confident about what you're doing. Most importantly, be very responsible. In England once you're 18 years old, you're legal to drink. Do not take full advantage of this because you are in a completely different country that you are not familiar with. Always be with a group of people and drink responsibly. I hope you have an amazing experience in York. This will be a special experience!