



POCKET ROUGH GUIDE

DURHAM CITY

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Visit County Durham





Durham City

The handsome city of Durham is best known for its beautiful Norman cathedral – there's a tremendous view of it as you approach the city by train from the south – and for its world-renowned university, founded in 1832. Set on the banks of the River Wear, Durham is a city that invites exploration at every turn of its cobbled streets. The heart of the city is the marketplace, flanked by the Guildhall and St Nicholas Church. The cathedral and church sit on a wooded peninsula to the west, while southwards stretch narrow streets lined with shops and cafés. Durham's highlights are easily reached thanks to regular **TransPennine Express** services from the north of England.

Durham Castle

Durham, DH1 3RW

🌐 durhamworldheritagesite.com. **Charge** Durham Castle lost its medieval appearance long ago, as each successive Prince Bishop modernised the building according to the tastes of the time. The university was bequeathed the castle in the nineteenth century and subsequently renovated the old keep, which now serves as a hall of residence. It's only possible to visit the castle on a guided tour – often delivered by students – departing from outside Palace Green Library, highlights of which include the enormous hanging staircase and the underground Norman chapel, one of the few surviving interiors from the period. It's notable for its lively Romanesque carved capitals, including a green man, and what may be the earliest surviving depiction anywhere of a mermaid.

Durham Cathedral

Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3EH 🌐 durhamworldheritagesite.com. **Free entry to Cathedral; Castle guided tours chargeable** Dominating the skyline, Durham Cathedral is a masterpiece of Norman architecture. Home to the tomb of St Cuthbert, it

features awe-inspiring stained-glass windows, a medieval cloister and the stunning Galilee Chapel. The nave used pointed arches for the first time in England, raising the vaulted ceiling to new and dizzying heights. Massive pillars bear the weight of the stone, their heaviness relieved by striking Moorish-influenced geometric patterns. A door on the western side gives access to the tower, from where there are panoramic views of Durham's medieval streets and the River Wear. Guided tours provide a deeper insight into its heritage and associated pop culture – this iconic cathedral is also famous as a filming location for *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Avengers: Endgame*.

Crook Hall Gardens

Frankland Lane, Sidegate, DH1 5SZ

🌐 nationaltrust.org.uk. **Charge**

Crook Hall is a hidden gem less than a mile from Durham's train station. A rare mix of medieval, Jacobean and Georgian architecture with origins dating from the twelfth century, it is one of the city's most important medieval buildings. You can



The Cathedral and the River Wear
Diana Jarvis/Visit England

explore beautifully tended, themed gardens, including the ethereal Silver and White Garden, the Shakespeare Garden, planted with herbs used in Elizabethan times, and the delightful Secret Walled Garden. Afterwards, drop in at the Garden Gate Café and shop at the gatehouse.

The River Wear – walks and rowing boats

Durham DH1 thisisdurham.com. Free (Rowing boat hire chargeable)

The River Wear winds through Durham, offering one of the most picturesque ways to experience the city. Visitors can stroll along scenic riverside paths, passing beneath medieval bridges and enjoying views of the towering cathedral above. For a unique perspective, hire a traditional rowing boat and glide along the river, taking in the tranquil surroundings. This peaceful stretch of water is perfect for a relaxing afternoon exploring Durham's natural beauty at your own pace.

Durham Market Hall

Market Place, Durham, DH1 3NJ
durhammarkets.co.uk. Free

At the heart of the city, Durham Market Hall is a lively indoor market featuring over 40 independent traders selling fresh produce, handmade crafts and unique gifts. A blend of old and new, the market has been a staple of Durham life since 1851. From artisan foods to vintage finds, it's a great place to support local businesses and discover hidden gems. Regular themed events and markets ensure there's always something new to experience.

The Story

Mount Oswald, Durham, DH1 3TQ

durham.gov.uk/thestory. Charge

The Story is Durham City's latest attraction, offering a fascinating insight into the region's rich past. Located in the historic Mount Oswald Manor, it brings together ancient archives, archeological finds and records of life-changing events. Visitors can absorb exhibits covering Durham's social, political and industrial history, as well as discover personal stories from the people who have shaped the city. This immersive experience does a brilliant job of highlighting Durham's unique heritage in an engaging and interactive way.

Ushaw Historic House, Chapels and Gardens

Ushaw, Durham, DH7 9RH ushaw.org. Charge

Once a seminary, Ushaw Historic House is now a breathtaking attraction that showcases stunning Gothic architecture and beautifully landscaped gardens. The intricate chapels, grand halls and fascinating exhibitions tell the story of its religious and educational past, and visitors can explore the extensive grounds, enjoy afternoon tea in the café and take part in the cultural events hosted throughout the year. With its rich history and remarkable beauty, Ushaw offers a serene and inspiring escape, just outside the city centre.



Restaurants, cafés and pubs

Fabios

66 Sadler St, DH1 3NP

🌐 fabiosdurham.com

Just above *La Spaghetтата* pizzeria, *Fabios* occupies a series of rooms filled with comfy, rug-draped sofas and chalked-up blackboards offering cheap-as-chips drinks. The atmosphere is cool and relaxed.

Flat White

21a Elvet Bridge, DH1 3AA

🌐 flatwhitekitchen.com

Durham's hippest café, serving excellent coffee served on wooden boards and terrific brunches. The avocado on sourdough with chilli and feta and ham hock hash with poached eggs are the stand-out dishes. Sit outside in the sun, or inside at tables made from old sewing machines that are more comfortable than they sound.

Restaurant 17

17 Elvet Bridge, DH1 3AA

🌐 restaurant17.co.uk

This elegant restaurant, warmed by a brick fireplace and dimly lit by chandeliers, serves a menu of considered European dishes such

as slow roast beef brisket ragu with papardelle, slow-cooked beef with red wine jus, and pan-fried duck breast with orange sauce and Lyonnaise potatoes. More exotic offerings, such as Korean glazed belly pork, are also available.

Swan & Three Cygnets

Elvet Bridge, DH1 3AF 📞 0191 384 0242

Sitting proudly at the end of Elvet Bridge overlooking the River Wear, this loud and cheery pub serves cheap drinks and is filled with a mixed crowd of locals and students.

Vennel's

71 Saddler's Yard, Saddler St, DH1 3NP

🌐 vennels.com

Named after the skinny alley or "vennel" where it stands – near the junction with Elvet Bridge – this café serves generous sandwiches, salads, quiche and tasty cakes in its sixteenth-century courtyard.

Victoria Inn

86 Hallgarth St, DH1 3AS

🌐 victoriainn-durhamcity.co.uk

With its three open fires and rickety wooden stools, this cosy, traditional pub specializes in local ales – try the creamy Tyneside Blonde or the hoppy Centurion Bitter – and stocks more than thirty Irish whiskeys.

Restaurants on Elvet Bridge

Wangkun Jia/Shutterstock

