



POCKET ROUGH GUIDE

NEWCASTLE

written and researched by
AUSTIN CLARK

Toms Auzins/Shutterstock



Newcastle

Newcastle, the lively de facto capital of the Northeast (just don't expect those from Sunderland to agree), is a city packed with things to see and do. Its compact centre makes it easy to explore on foot or by metro, from the café-laden streets of Jesmond and Heaton to the vibrant Ouseburn cultural quarter. Famous for its fantastic foodie scene, Newcastle boasts an array of independent restaurants, street food markets and hidden gems serving global cuisine. The city is also home to legendary nightlife, with everything from historic pubs to stylish cocktail bars and music venues. Whether you're enjoying a riverside stroll along the Quayside, exploring cultural highlights, or discovering its dynamic bar scene, Newcastle offers a perfect blend of history, culture and entertainment. With regular TransPennine Express services into Newcastle from Edinburgh, Yorkshire, Manchester and Liverpool, the city is well-connected for visitors looking to explore this exciting city. Find out more about visiting Newcastle with TransPennine Express.

Newcastle Castle

Castle Garth, NE1 1RQ  newcastlecastle.co.uk. Charge (valid for 12 months)

Anyone arriving by train from the north will get a sneak preview of the Castle, as the rail line splits the keep from its gatehouse, the Black Gate, on St Nicholas Street. A wooden fort was built here over an Anglo-Saxon cemetery by Robert Curthose, illegitimate eldest son of William the Conqueror, but the present keep dates from the twelfth century. There's a great view from the rooftop over the river and city. Moreover, there are all kinds of events taking place year-round, including tours and talks, live theatre and film screenings; check the website.

Newcastle Cathedral

At the junction of St Nicholas St and Mosley St, NE1 1DF  newcastlecathedral.org.uk. Free, donation requested

Newcastle Cathedral – originally the parish church of St Nicholas and dating mainly from the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – is remarkable chiefly for its tower; erected in 1470, it is topped with a crown-like structure of turrets and arches supporting a lantern. Inside, behind the high altar, is one of England's largest funerary brasses, commissioned by Roger Thornton, the Dick Whittington of Newcastle, who arrived in the city penniless and died its richest merchant in 1429.

Quayside

By the Tyne. Free

From between the castle and the cathedral, a road known simply as The Side – formerly the main road out of the city and home to the excellent Side Gallery – descends to Newcastle's Quayside. The river is spanned by seven bridges in close proximity, the most prominent being the looming Tyne Bridge. Beyond the Tyne Bridge is an area of riverside apartments, landscaped promenades, public sculpture and



pedestrianized squares, along with a series of fashionable bars and restaurants centred on the graceful Gateshead Millennium Bridge, the world's first tilting span, which pivots to let ships pass.

BALTIC

By the Millennium Bridge, Gateshead Quays, NE8 3BA  baltic.art. Free

Fashioned from an old brick flourmill, BALTIC sits on the Gateshead riverbank, by the Millennium Bridge. Designed to be a huge visual “art factory”, it's second only in scale to London's Tate Modern. There's no permanent collection here – instead there's an ever-changing calendar of exhibitions and local community projects, as well as artists' studios, education workshops, an art performance space and cinema, plus a rooftop restaurant with uninterrupted views of the Newcastle skyline.

Grainger Market

Grainger St, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 5QQ  graingermarket.org.uk. Free

Housed in a stunning Grade II-listed Victorian building, Grainger Market is one of Newcastle's most treasured food destinations. Packed with independent traders, the market

offers everything from fresh local produce to international street food stalls, including award-winning Indian street food, dumplings and fresh seafood. A favourite among locals and visitors alike, it's the perfect place to grab a bite to eat and experience Newcastle's thriving foodie scene while soaking up the market's historic charm.

Ouseburn – Newcastle's Creative Quarter

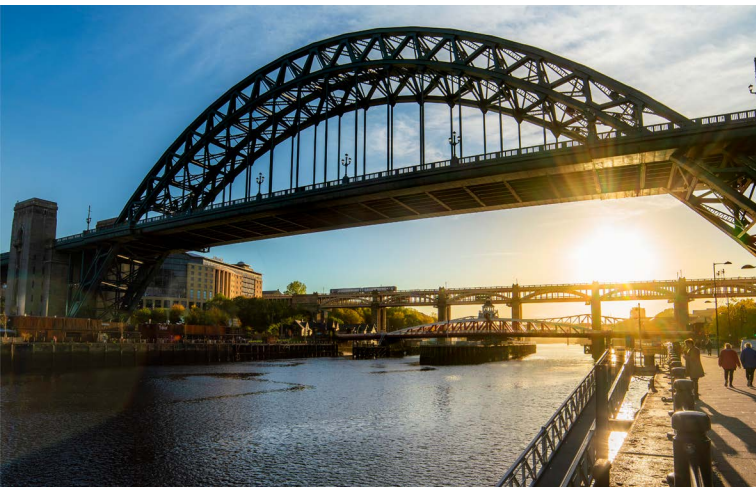
Ouseburn, Newcastle, NE1

 ouseburn.org.uk. Free

Just a short walk for those arriving in Newcastle by train, Ouseburn is Newcastle's coolest district, packed with independent galleries, live music venues and quirky bars. Once something of an industrial heartland, it's now home to cultural spaces such as The Biscuit Factory – the UK's largest independent contemporary art gallery – and Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books. Visitors can also explore street art trails, enjoy craft beers in repurposed warehouses, or relax in scenic riverside spots. The district is also where you'll find the famous Ouseburn Farm. Here, visitors can meet friendly animals and learn about sustainable urban farming.

The Tyne Bridge

Courtesy of NewcastleGateshead Initiative





Heaton Road

Courtesy of NewcastleGateshead Initiative

Theatre Royal and Newcastle's live entertainment

100 Grey St, Newcastle, NE1 6BR

📞 theatreroyal.co.uk. Charge

Newcastle's Theatre Royal is an architectural gem and a premier venue for theatre, ballet and opera. Hosting visiting West End productions and touring performances, it provides a world-class experience for theatre lovers. The city also boasts a diverse live entertainment scene, with comedy clubs, independent cinemas and music venues putting on everything from classical concerts to cutting-edge performances. For a uniquely Geordie experience, visitors should also check out The Stand Comedy Club or Sage Gateshead, a world-renowned music venue on the banks of the Tyne.

Jesmond and Heaton – café culture and green spaces

Jesmond and Heaton, Newcastle, NE2

📞 newcastlegateshead.com. Free

Just a short distance from the city centre, the leafy suburbs of Jesmond and Heaton are known for their relaxed café culture and beautiful parks. Jesmond

Dene, a picturesque, wooded valley, provides a tranquil escape with waterfalls, wildlife and scenic walking trails. Heaton's bustling high street is lined with independent coffee shops, bakeries and vintage stores, making it a great spot to soak up Newcastle's local charm. The parks also host open-air events, including live theatre performances and seasonal food markets.

The Bigg Market and Newcastle's nightlife

Bigg Market, Newcastle, NE1

📞 newcastlegateshead.com. Free

Newcastle's nightlife is legendary, and the Bigg Market is at the centre of it all. There's something for every night owl, from traditional pubs housed in sixteenth-century buildings to trendy rooftop cocktail bars. The city also has unique venues such as bars in shipping containers and art deco former palaces. Whether you want to dance until dawn, sip craft ales, or enjoy live music, Newcastle's vibrant nightlife scene is hard to beat. For a different kind of night out, visitors can try late-night crazy golf or retro gaming bars.



Shops

The Biscuit Factory

16 Stoddard St, NE2 1AN

📞 thebiscuitfactory.com

Offering everything from bespoke jewellery, ceramics and homeware to greetings cards, you'll struggle to leave without picking up a treat at this shop located in the UK's largest independent contemporary art, craft and design gallery.

Fenwick

39 Northumberland St, NE1 7AS

📞 fenwick.co.uk

A Newcastle institution since 1882, *Fenwick* is the city's go-to department store. But it's the beauty hall that really steals the show – the largest outside of London, it's a glossy haven of big-name brands and niche discoveries. Add to that seasonal rooftop pop-ups, an excellent food hall and regular in-store events, and you've got far more than just a department store – this is a full day out.

Restaurants

21

Trinity Gardens, NE1 2HH

📞 21newcastle.co.uk

This Parisian-style bistro, with crisp white tablecloths and leather banquettes, offers a classic French menu and slick service. Expect dishes like confit of duck with Lyonnaise potatoes or smoked haddock with softly poached hen's egg, and delicious desserts – the Florentine doughnut with strawberry jam and crème Chantilly is particularly good.

Blackfriars

Friars St, NE1 4XN

📞 blackfriarsrestaurant.co.uk

Housed in a beautiful stone building dating to 1239, *Blackfriars* offers superb traditional British dishes made with local ingredients.

Mains could include pork loin with a bacon and cheese floddie (potato cakes, originating from Gateshead, and traditionally eaten for breakfast) or a Doddington cheese and onion Wellington with chive cream sauce. For afters, dig into sticky toffee pudding with green grape ice cream and Brown Ale caramel. Book ahead.

El Coto

21 Leazes Park Rd, NE1 4PF 📞 elcoto.co.uk

Cute and cosy, this great tapas place has an extensive, good-value menu featuring all the usuals. The *patatas bravas*, *chorizo frito* (sausage with garlic and white wine) and marinated sardines are the pick of the menu, but the food is so good you'll want to return and make your way through the lot.

Pani's

61–65 High Bridge St, NE1 6BX

📞 paniscafe.co.uk

On a side street below the Theatre Royal, this lively Sardinian restaurant has won a loyal clientele thanks to a long list of mouthwatering house specialities like *culurgiones rossi* (handmade pasta parcels filled with pecorino, mint and potato). Closed Sun.

Rebel

150 Heaton Park Rd, NE6 5NR

📞 restaurantrebel.co.uk

Rebel is as good as it gets when it comes to food in Newcastle. An easy-going spot in the somewhat incongruous surrounds of the student district, with a choice of five or ten-course tasting menus (including a vegan one, creditably) with plates like salsify, potato butter and black garlic, and halibut with fermented artichoke and pine butter to devour.

Quay Ingredient

4 Queen St, Quayside, NE1 3UG

📞 quayingredient.co.uk

Teeny tiny and popular, it's best to take the early train and beat the

crowds if you want to enjoy brunch at weekends. The full English is generous and the eggs benedict tasty, while the sandwiches, salads and cakes are all excellent. There's great coffee, too. Note that doors remain closed on Wednesdays.

Pubs and bars

As You Like It

Archbold Terrace, NE2 1DB

📞 asyoulikeitjesmond.com

Sitting incongruously beneath an ugly tower block, this funky bar/restaurant (actually four bars over three floors) has a relaxed vibe, exposed brick walls and a mishmash of furniture. The Supper Club, a club night on Fri & Sat features jazz, blues and soul.

Crown Posada

31 Side, NE1 3JE 📞 crownposada.co.uk

A proper old man's boozer: local beers and guest ales in this small wood-and-glass-panelled Victorian pub. You might fancy the dark, malty Hadrian's Gladiator or opt for the golden, hoppy Tyneside

Blackfriars

Courtesy of NewcastleGateshead Initiative

Blonde. Whatever, taking the train is a good idea as you'll no doubt want to try more than a pint or two.

Free Trade

St Lawrence Rd, NE6 1AP

📞 0191 265 5764

Walk along the Newcastle Quayside past the Millennium Bridge and look for the shabby pub on the hill, where you are invited to "drink beer and smoke tabs" with the city's pub cognoscenti. Cask beer from local microbreweries is a real treat, while a great free juke box and superb river views from the beer garden make the trip extra worthwhile.

Mother Mercy

Old George Yard, High Bridge, NE1 1EZ

📞 mothermercy.co.uk

Hidden away in a historic alley just off High Bridge, this low-lit cocktail den has fast become one of Newcastle's best-kept secrets. Expect expertly mixed drinks, plush interiors and a soundtrack that keeps the vibe just the right side of lively.

