

York's Hidden Gems

[Ella Barker](#) takes you off the beaten track to reveal some of the city's hidden highlights

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Image: [alh1](#)

It won't take you long to discover that there is life beyond Heslington itself. The city is a plethora of eateries, independent nooks and crannies, and allegedly enough pubs to see you through an entire year. Still, it's all too easy for your mental map of the city to be dictated by York's nightlife. Here's a few hidden gems to get you started for the daylight hours (if you choose to surface, that is).

The Perky Peacock, Lendal

Quite possibly the quirkiest coffee shop you'll come across in York. Not many cafes can claim to be housed in a medieval stone tower! Overlooking the Ouse, The Perky Peacock is suited for watching the river rise and plotting your escape from the impending flood. Besides that, their coffee and nibbles are a sure-fire way to beat revision blues. The homemade 'Nob Hobs' are a must-have - so much better than their original namesake. Ooh and bring a jumper. The heating is somewhat primordial (read: non-existent).

The Artists Garden - York Art Gallery, Exhibition Square

Tucked behind the more prominent Museum Gardens and only recently re-opened to the public, this idyllic spot is not (yet) frequented by many, and certainly not York's daily influx of tourists departing the first off-peak train. Undoubtedly at its most beautiful on a clear, warm May morning (I know, we can dream) the addition of a book and breakfast from Brew & Brownie (not so much a gem as an obligation for all UoY students) is far more attainable.

Minster Library, Dean's Park

When JB Morrell gets busy and King's Manor seems all too elusive, indulge your childhood fantasies of studying at Hogwarts and amble over to the Old Palace, just behind the Minster itself. A beautiful building conducive for the most peaceful of studies, its Reading Room is too precious to allow students with pens or food to enter. Strictly a laptop / pencil zone only! Plus if dry, Dean's Park makes the perfect spot for lunch or a mid-study breather. Lush.

The Hop, Fossgate

Once you've become too kooky to dine at York's myriad food chains, take refuge at The Hop for the most fabulous stone baked pizzas you'll find in Yorkshire. I urge you to try this traditional alehouse where walls are studded with Romanesque mosaics, and the pizzeria lurking behind the atrium is a real hidden gem. A must have for all freshers. Easy on the wallet too - most of the pizzas are around £7-8.

York Cocoa House, Blake Street

Essentially the Yorkshire equivalent of Hotel Chocolat - but so much better. Who knew one unit could house a chocolate café and dining club, chocolate workshops and the most impressive array of gifts to take home. Or in fact eat yourself. Safe to say the violet truffles went down very well with my mother. One to file for all those forgotten birthdays.

The Eagle & Child - Leeds Brewery, High Petergate

Strangely a pub's namesake that doesn't take after its location... This one, just a stone's throw from the Minster is ideal for gushing at sunsets setting over the city, especially when perched on the pub's window seat right up on the third floor. Take a good friend, settle down with a bottle (25% off on Wine Wednesday) and set the world to rights.

The Star Inn The City, Museum Street

Quite literally a star, albeit a pricey one at that. Situated in the Museum Gardens, this stunning restaurant and bar is not so much a hidden gem as a shining beacon of haute cuisine. Save this one for graduation dinners, 21st birthday celebrations and the occasional moment of extravagance, as demonstrated by how they serve tequila: with miniature salt and pepper pots. The most middle class shot you'll ever encounter.



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