

# York, The Vale of York, The Yorkshire Wolds and the North York Moors

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**Tour Organiser: Harvey Dowdy**

**Friday 20th to Friday 27th June 2025**

A seven-day tour consisting of a series of day rides on quiet country lanes through the stunning Yorkshire countryside. Natural wonders include the chalk hills and hidden valleys of the Wolds, the ancient landscape of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the heather-clad moorland of the North York Moors National Park.

Based in York and Helmsley, riders will have the opportunity to visit the historic attractions in York (York Minster, the City Walls and Snickleways), Selby Abbey, Beningborough Hall, Ampleforth Abbey, Helmsley Castle and Walled Garden and Castle Howard.

For steam train enthusiasts - we will also cycle via the North York Moors Railway terminus in Pickering.

The tour includes 4 nights in the 3\*Radisson Hotel in the centre of York followed by 3 nights in the 4\*Feversham Arms Hotel and Verbena Spa in Helmsley on a bed and breakfast basis. Dinner is also included on arrivals night and on the last night in Helmsley.

## Itinerary

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**Friday 20th June 2025 Arrival Day**

Meet at hotel (check in from 3pm) Opportunity for sightseeing in York before dinner at 7pm (venue to be confirmed).

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

## **Saturday 21st June 2025 York to Selby Circuit - following the Yorkshire Ouse south**

We leave York on the towpath beside the River Ouse and the former Terry's chocolate factory, cycling through Bishopthorpe and passing the Palace of the Archbishop of York. Cycling along country lanes we pass through the villages of Naburn and Kelfield, Cawood and Wistow Lordship before arriving in Selby for lunch. There will be time to visit Selby Abbey before leaving the town via the historic Swing Bridge. Turning north we will join NCN 65 'The Planets Solar System Trail' which will take us back into York City centre. As this is a relatively short day in the saddle there should be plenty of time later in the afternoon to sightsee in York.

- Route distance: 53.0km
- Route altitude gain: 157m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

## **Sunday 22nd June 2025 York to Boroughbridge Circuit - following the Yorkshire Ouse north**

We cycle north out of the City past the former Rowntree Chocolate Factory - (now Nestle but still the home of KitKat production in the UK- which you may be able to smell!) and through the suburbs of Haxby and Wigginton before taking the single-track road known as Bull Lane, via 'Bohemia' to Huby. There is a short stretch of gravel (c.1.5km) to navigate on this section of the route which can be managed by the majority of road bikes. From Huby we continue north to Helperby before turning west to arrive in the thriving market town of Boroughbridge where we will have lunch. The town is known for its independent shops and in particular Appletons the Butchers - famous for their award-winning pork pies. We return to York via NCN 688 the 'Way of the Roses' crossing the River Ure at Aldwark Toll Bridge and making our way to Beningborough Hall (National Trust) for a short visit and a tea break. From there we will follow NCN 65 back to the City Centre.

- Route distance: 76.0km
- Route altitude gain: 293m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

## **Monday 23rd June 2025 York to Fridaythorpe Circuit via Pocklington, Millington Pastures, Thixendale and Leavening.**

For our longest day in the saddle we will cycle steadily on quiet, flat roads across the Vale of York to the market town of Pocklington - home of the anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce. We will have a cafe stop here before heading up steadily into the little-known Yorkshire Wolds and the spectacular chalk valleys of Millington Pastures and Huggate Wold.

After lunch in Fridaythorpe the route is almost entirely downhill as we cycle into Burdale, Thixendale and Waterdale on the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway - NCN 167. After the village of Leavening we drop back down into the Vale of York via Howsham Mill and a series of small, picturesque villages to arrive back into the city centre via the Millennium Bridge.

- Route distance: 92.0km
- Route altitude gain: 760m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

### **Tuesday 24th June 2025 York to Helmsley**

We retrace our route to Beningborough Hall before heading north east on NCN 65 to the market town of Easingwold where we will pause for a cafe stop. Staying on this route we start to climb towards the Howardian Hills via Newburgh Priory before stopping for lunch at Ampleforth Abbey - a working Benedictine monastery which sits alongside Ampleforth College - a renowned Catholic Independent School. From Ampleforth we have a short, sharp climb out of the village to climb up to Beacon House before enjoying a fast (mostly) descent into Helmsley. We should arrive in time to check in and explore the town e.g. the Walled Garden and Castle, make a pilgrimage to Ryeburn Ice Cream Parlour or simply enjoy a stroll around the Market Square.

- Route distance: 58.0km
- Route altitude gain: 573m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

### **Wednesday 25th June 2025 The Cockayne Circuit**

Today we will venture across the northern edge of the Vale of Pickering via Harome and the Anglo-Saxon church known as St Gregory's Minster to Kirkbymoorside. From there we will travel up and on to the North York Moors via Gillamoor - pausing to take in the breathtaking views looking down into Farndale. From Gillamoor the road climbs steadily to a high point above Rudland Rigg where we can picnic in the heather if fine - otherwise we can make our way to the remote hamlet of Cockayne itself. After a steep climb out of Cockayne, we descend gently back down through woods and pastures to Helmsley.

- Route distance: 46.0km
- Route altitude gain: 766m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

### **Thursday 26th June 2025 Helmsley to Castle Howard, Malton, Pickering Circuit**

Today's ride crosses the Vale of Pickering heading south to Slingsby before climbing up into the Howardian Hills and a cafe stop in Castle Howard Courtyard. We retrace our route a short distance to get to Coneysthorpe and take the road past the Great Lake to Malton -

'Yorkshire's Food Capital' - for lunch. After lunch we will take the relatively new cycle route from Malton to Pickering arriving in time to take tea (or something stronger!) at the North York Moors Railway. After Pickering we will explore the Vale of Pickering and its villages some of which have their origins in the Mesolithic period - 5000BC. The Vale was originally a glacial lake formed after the last ice age. Today, it is a low-lying, flat area of land criss-crossed by dykes and ditches which drain into the Rivers Rye and Derwent - bridges are few and far between - which makes for an interesting if somewhat circuitous ride back to Helmsley.

- Route distance: 77.0km
- Route altitude gain: 530m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

### Friday 27th June 2025 Helmsley to York

Today we cross the Howardian Hills for the final time - via Hovingham (Hovingham Hall is home to the Worsley family and was the childhood home of the Duchess of Kent) and we will stop at the Yorkshire Lavender Farm cafe at Terrington. From Terrington, the route takes back into the City of York via Sheriff Hutton with its ruined castle, Flaxton and Strensall before passing York Minster for one last time. We should arrive back in York by mid-afternoon.

- Route distance: 51.0km
- Route altitude gain: 364m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

## Dates and Prices

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### Cost

- Land only price: £1250

### Payment Schedule

A deposit of £400 per person is required as soon as possible once the Tour Manager has processed your Booking Form (see below), with the final balance of £850 per person to be paid no later than ten weeks prior to departure, by 11 April 2025.

### Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:

Cancellation charge:

Up to 28th February 2025 Deposit (£400)

From 1st March to departure 100% (£1250)

To make a booking

Read the section on 'Booking a Holiday' on the Bikexplore website, then contact the Tour Manager to check that there are still places available. If there are, download and complete the booking form and email it to the Tour Manager. Once it's been processed instructions on how to pay the deposit (and balance) will be sent to you.

Price includes:

- 7 nights hotel accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, sharing rooms
- Two evening meals.
- Vehicle support on cycling days.

Price does not include:

- Drinks with evening meals other than those provided.
- Lunches or refreshments during the day.
- Entry fees at any attractions visited.
- Travel Insurance.
- Any other personal expenses.

### Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
Up to 28th February 2025	Deposit (£400)
From 1st March to departure	100% (£1250)

The price of £1250 is based on a minimum number of 6 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Friday 28th February 2025, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

## Holiday Information

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### Grade and Area Covered by the Holiday

This Holiday is classed as Moderately Energetic.

From our hotels in York and Helmsley in England we will explore the surrounding countryside in a series of day rides.

The terrain varies between flat / rolling / occasionally hilly.

Of particular interest, we will see Selby Abbey, Beningborough Hall, Ampleforth Abbey, Castle Howard and the Yorkshire Lavender Farm. When in York you will have time to visit York Minster and /or other City Centre attractions on foot. In Helmsley the Helmsley Walled Garden and Helmsley Castle are both a very short stroll from the hotel.

We will be travelling through North Yorkshire.

### **Travel and Communication**

The tour starts and finishes in York which has trains. The nearest rail station is York.

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Manager nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.

Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have

been told the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

We will use WhatsApp to communicate details like café stops, meal arrangements, places of interest and any emergencies on route. Ideally everyone will bring a smart phone and be happy to be included in the group.

If you are unable to join the WhatsApp group I can only communicate with you in an emergency.

### **Accommodation**

The maximum number of participants will be 10 excluding the Tour Manager and driver.

We will stay in a 3-star hotel in York and a 4-star country house hotel in Helmsley.

There are 6 twin or double bedrooms reserved all en-suite. Rooms will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis.

Prices are based on two people sharing a room.

When booking with a partner to share please specify twin or double beds.

If you wish to occupy a double or twin room on a single occupancy basis then you will be charged for the room at the full rate.

### **Meals, Health and Diet**

On 7 days breakfast will be provided for us either at our accommodation or in a local restaurant. We will source and pay for lunch and dinner ourselves on 6 days.

On 2 days – one of which will be arrival day – dinner will be provided.

We will frequently be travelling through rural areas and will stop at cafes during the rides whenever possible but you should buy and carry sufficient food and drink for lunch in case of emergencies.

Check which meals are provided in the Payment Schedule and ensure you have access to sufficient monies to cover any meals you will need to buy.

Check that you have informed the Tour Manager of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form.

Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly.

### **Cycles and Equipment**

A touring cycle, hybrid, tandem, recumbent or lightweight road bike would all be suitable for this holiday, since there is only one short section on a well-made track.

You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes.

A low bottom gear (eg. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended; if unsure about gears, please talk to the Bikexplore Leader about them.

Mudguards are optional but demonstrate respect to those who are following you in wet weather.

Lights are recommended in the very unlikely event of arriving back late and useful if walking outdoors at night. A bell is advised and bring a bike lock for security. Water bottles are required to ensure you are hydrated at all times.

You will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs, including two inner tubes, a spare gear cable, split link and spare brake pads. There may not be many bike shops on route and they are never when you need them.

You are advised to use 28mm tyres, or larger, to suit the variable terrain.

a) You will not need to carry luggage, but a rack-top pack or bar bag will be useful for carrying wet weather gear, spare clothing needed for the day, camera, emergency rations and a map.

### **Ride and Rest Days**

The holiday is for 7 days and without a rest day. We will spend 4 nights in York and 3 nights in Helmsley – cycling to and from Helmsley via two different routes over the Howardian Hills.

Most of the roads are minor and used by rural/tourist traffic and will be hilly in parts. We may need to use some short sections of busier roads at times but avoid them as much as possible.

A short part of the route will take in a greenway.

Most of each cycling day may be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 10-20 km on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified of the two or three available or recommended refreshment stops each day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore and this is okay. You are on holiday!

It is essential to get out on your bike and do some 50 - 80 km rides before the tour starts. Our longest day will be 92km – however it is flat for the first third – hilly for a relatively short section followed by a substantial section downhill back into York – so if you can ride 80km you should not be deterred.

There are a few steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to road works or weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.

The tour manager will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route and likely stopping places each day.

### **Weather, Clothing and Culture**

Lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures is needed and possibly smarter, warmer clothing for the evenings.

Lightweight waterproofs/windproofs will be needed.

Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended along with insect repellent and bite cream.



My packing list is available on request - advisable if this is your first tour.

UK and Mid-Northern Europe climates

The temperature in June in North Yorkshire is likely to be between 18-20 degrees C (day) and 10 (night) degrees. On average some rainfall can be expected on 4 days of the tour with an average total of 42 mm of rain for the whole month.

The weather can be variable, with a possibility of both heat waves and cold, wet weather, so be prepared for all possibilities including storms.

### **Maps and Guides**

A gpx, or an online link to a gpx, of each day's route and/or detailed route notes, will be provided before the start of the tour.

Recommended OS paper maps Explorer 290, 294, 300, OL26, OL27 or digital OS.

There are many guidebooks on the City of York and North Yorkshire plus online websites for most of the places we intend to visit

### **Travel Insurance and Vaccination**

Travel insurance is not compulsory for UK nationals traveling in the UK.

Current Covid and Influenza vaccinations are recommended for participants of 75 years of age and over and those deemed medically vulnerable.

It is recommended that you are vaccinated against hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus and that protection has not expired. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice for travelers.

### **Tour Manager contact details**

Tour Organiser. Harvey Dowdy 07769 540308 harvey.dowdy@gmail.com