

A guide to Whitby, Yorkshire's unique vampire town.

Things To See and Do in Whitby Before You Die

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Welcome To Whitby

Dracula, smugglers, golden beaches and kippers – where else but Whitby? Much more than just a quintessentially-English fishing port, Whitby's remote location on the far side of the North Yorkshire Moors has enabled it to preserve much of its unique identity and heritage into the 21st century.

While tourism may long since have replaced the sea as the town's main source of income, Whitby's inhabitants have lost none of the independence and pride that are central to their character and to Whitby's enduring appeal.



Situated on a geological fault, where the River Esk bisects the otherwise uninterrupted cliffs of the North Yorkshire coastline, Whitby's origins can be traced back at least 1350 years to the founding of Saint Hilda's Abbey in 657AD. The abbey was setup by Hilda at the behest of King Oswy of Northumbria, who upon winning the Battle of Winwaed had vowed that he would found a number of monasteries throughout his kingdom. As part of this vow, he gave his daughter, Aelfleda, to the monastic life.

The success of the original abbey was to be short-lived, as in 867 the abbey was sacked by the Danes, who were taking control of large parts of the region. Whitby survived this disruption, however, and in 1078 the abbey was rebuilt by the Normans to survive until 1539, when Henry VIII's policies forced St Hilda's Abbey to close for the final time.

In the centuries since its religious importance declined, Whitby has progressed from a small fishing port to a trading port of some regional importance, and finally to a major UK tourist destination.



Today, much of 18th and 19th century Whitby has been preserved and restored, and the town has a plethora of old and new attractions which draw visitors back, year after year.

Some of England's finest sandy beaches vie with Victorian gothic buildings, the legend of Count Dracula, major traditional music festivals, the religious heritage of

the abbey and the spectacular beauty of the Yorkshire Moors to define Whitby's appeal – in truth, the town that was once Captain Cook's home has many assets, and it is the combination of these that give Whitby its unique and intriguing character.



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